The Fan Magazine for Golden Age and Silver Age Collectors

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 15
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an interview by Charlie Roberts

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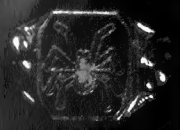
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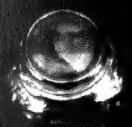
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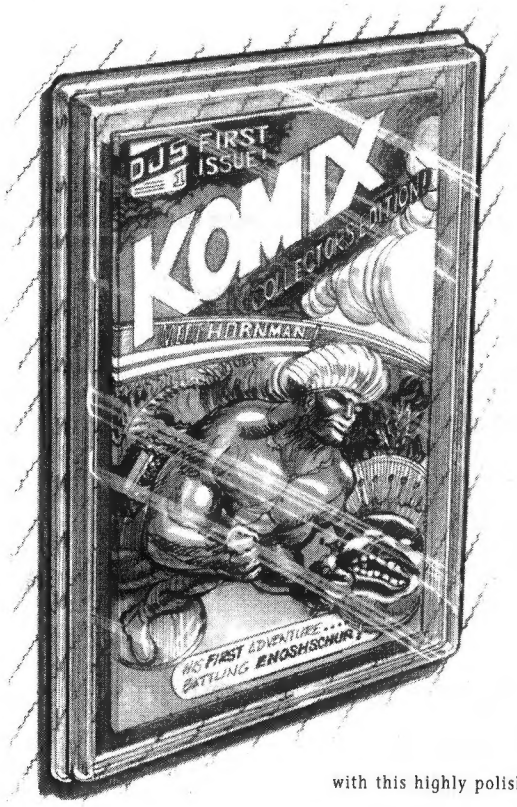

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COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

Issue #15, July 1992

ON THE COVER:
A "self portrait" of Creig Flessel at his drawing board and and two vintage comic books containing his early work. **SEE... Page 28**
(Sandman, Adventure Comics, and Detective Comics ©DC.)

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Issue Number 15, July, 1992

Mr. Sandman, won't you lend me a dream...

Good News! CBM #15 features a great interview with Golden Age legend Creig Flessel as well as an essay actually written by Creig himself. Among his numerous credits, long time Golden Age collectors remember him best as the early Sandman artist in *Adventure Comics*.

I vividly remember the day that I first became aware of his early work. It was the summer of 1962. I was standing (with my brother Lane and Pat Calhoun) in Bert Blum's "comic book loft" on the second floor of the Cherokee Book Store in downtown Hollywood, California. As I gazed longingly at Bert's "great wall of comics", he piqued the interest of my teen age brain by offhandedly remarking "have you ever seen an issue of *Detective Comics* BEFORE Batman started?". I took a deep breath and responded "you...mean...there are *Detective Comics* WITHOUT Batman? ... Can I see one?"

Burt smirked his special smirk, and pulled out a somewhat tattered copy of *Detective Comics* #1, cover dated March, 1937. As I stared in awe, I immediately noticed that it was missing the famous field of color behind the logo, so familiar on all the other Golden Age DCs I had seen previously! Not only that, but it was orange! *ORANGE* mind you...not exactly the most common color used for comic book covers! Bert finally broke the silence of my concentration with "would you like to see some more?" and proceeded to lay out issues 2-26 in a large fan across the table. It was love at first sight and, at the close of Bert's show-and-tell session, my brother and I were the proud owners of several of the less expensive, "$3 issues". Our combined finances at the time did not quite equal the $20 required to own the #1. But even so, I've never forgotten that magical day when I beheld, for the very first time, one of the most historically important premiere issues in comic book history.

While examining our newly purchased treasures on the long, late afternoon, ride back to San Diego, I noticed that many of the early *Detective* covers obtained that day were signed by the "mysterious" CREIG FLESSEL. I'm a little embarrassed to admit that I often mispronounced his first name (I said "CREEG") for almost eight years, but I eventually learned that Creig was pronounced "Craig". During the years of collecting and research that followed, Mr. Flessel's name (including his pseudonym "Fless") seemed to dominate almost every early issue of *Adventure, More Fun,* and *Detective*.

As I look back, it seems that I've always admired and enjoyed Creig's work since those early years of collecting. But as my interest in comic book history became more profound with each passing year, there has been an equally profound increase in my appreciation and respect for Mr. Flessel's pioneering work in the comic book industry. That's why it is a genuine thrill to salute Creig Flessel with this issue of CBM, and to share some of his legacy with a whole new group of collectors. Creig's talents have been "one of the best kept secrets" in fandom for years. His work has made an enormous contribution, not only to the history of comic books, but to the hobby of comic books.

But there is even more good news. Ten collectors and dealers, who are fans of Creig Flessel, are sponsoring him to the 1992 San Diego Comic Book Convention, August 13-16. Imagine having the opportunity to personally meet and chat with the artist who did so many historic pre-Batman covers for *Detective Comics*! What a truly marvelous opportunity. And in that regard, I feel a few thank yous are in order... Thanks to the sponsors for creating such a wonderful opportunity, thanks to Mr. Flessel for making the time in his busy schedule to come all the way out from the east coast to meet fans, and thanks to the San Diego ComicCon Committee for inviting Mr. Flessel to be one of their special guests. It looks like collectors are in for an exciting summer. San Diego in '92... be there or be square!

Gary

Gary M. Carter

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There are books published in many collectible fields, and few are milestones. The Photo-Journal Guide is one of these rare milestone books. This book will change the way we view and are viewed as a collectible field. This book is a must, and will always come highly recommended. To sum up the Photo Journal, it is not just a book, it is a publishing event.

Steve Kortus, Minneapolis, MN
Three days ago I received The Book, and I have yet to catch my breath. This is truly the event of the year, hell, the whole decade! The care and quality of your effort is evident on every page. Not only is the printing and layout excellent, but the many minor perks make this a five star value. You have performed a major miracle and comic fandom will never again be the same.

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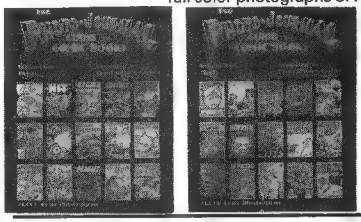

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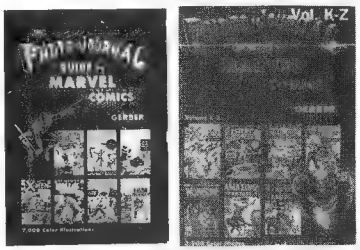

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What a phenomenal achievement! The historical aspect of your comic book compendium is inestimable. But as a source of graphic design for artists, it is even more important. The fact that you actually brought it off is a miracle. Thanks so much for your valiant effort.

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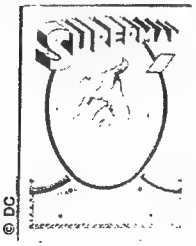
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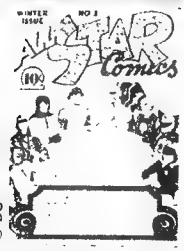

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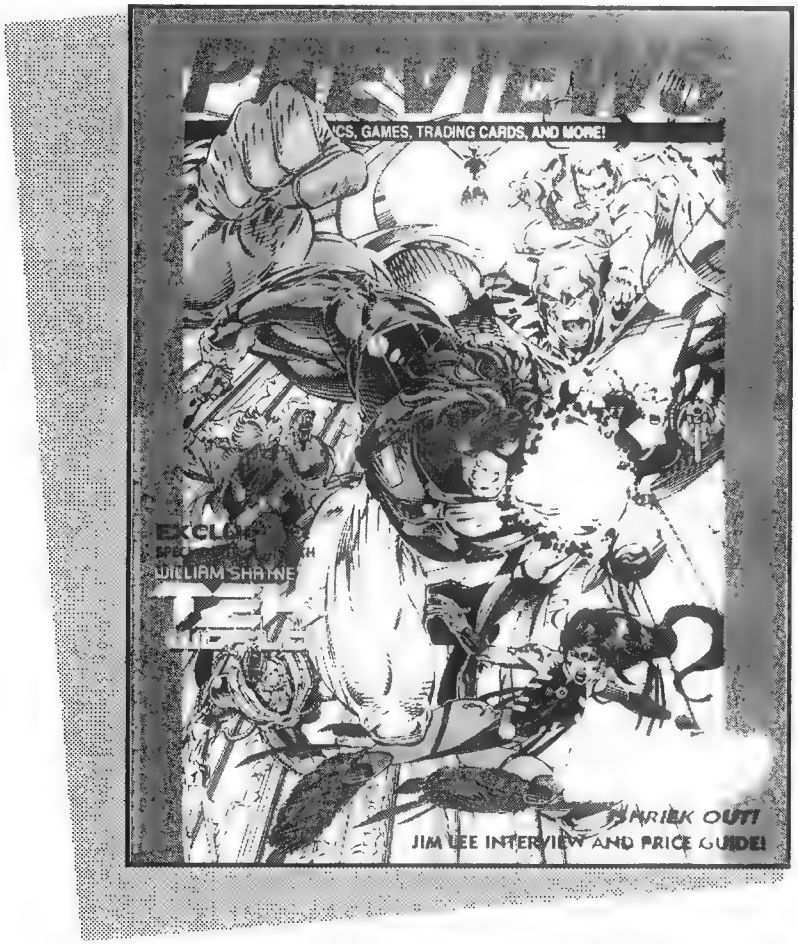

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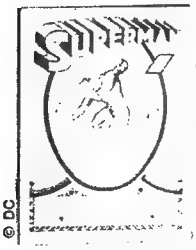
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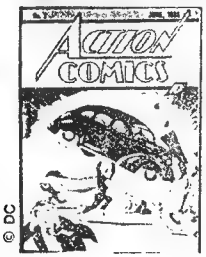

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DC's Great Silver Sci-Fi

One of the best things about post-code ten-cent DC science fiction is the art of Sid Greene. His precise style is extremely well-suited to futuristic cities, and there is a whimsical fecundity to the endless parade of alien creatures one encounters among those gleaming towers. Greene was particularly active during the late-1959 early-1960 peak that saw Adam Strange and Space Ranger begin their series; and Green Lantern's debut in *Showcase*; and the Challengers' cooking in book-length adventures; culminating with the Justice League of America's introduction in *Brave And Bold* #28.

Strange Adventures #111 (Dec 1959) features an unprecedented 16 page Sid Greene saga entitled "100 Years From Today". The story is told as a theatrical production in the present that presents a "you are there" view of a day in the future. On this day we see the return of the first starship, a monkey hunt on Venus, and a game of space-polo. Of course the narrator is revealed as an actual time-traveler in the end. This is one of those plots that requires bravura art to succeed, and Greene delivers the goods.

Another title verdant with "Greenery" is *Mystery In Space*. In #58 (Mar 1960) Adam Strange's nine pages are matched by "The Amazing Journeys Into Space" where, once again, time travel lets us in on the first trip to Mars, the first trip through the sun, and the first trip around the universe. The protagonist, who had dreamed of doing all those things but was "scooped" each time, is given a second chance via time travel, but ends up rescuing each of his three predecessors from various predicaments instead of upstaging them and is content with that. This is an OK story, with its heart in the right place, but again Greene's artistry is the main attraction.

In *Strange Adventures* #113 (Feb 1960) Greene gets a chance to illustrate a top-drawer tale of alien invasion, "The Menace of the Shrinking Bomb". This is the famous story where editor Julius Schwartz and writer Gardner Fox have key roles. In the editorial offices of "Union Publications" a brainstorm session ends with the writer sent home to dream up a fresh plot. Next day he calls in the idea of a sub-atomic world that shoots a bomb "up" to Earth, designed to shrink our world down to their size. The editor urges him to "think it out and bring it in tomorrow". Of course next day the writer doesn't show up and that afternoon it is discovered that the Earth is shrinking. "Schwartz" soon realizes that "Fox" holds the only hope of countering this infinitesimal invasion, and he organizes a search for the missing writer. Suspense mounts, and "Fox" is found in a hospital, and from the injured man an idea is coaxed that just might defeat the aliens... Greene's rendering of the editor is much more human and real than most comic characters based, it seems, on the "McCoy". This classic was reprinted in one of the From Beyond The

STRANGE ADVENTURES
DC
THE MARTIAN INVADERS HAVE MADE EVERYONE IN THE WORLD DISAPPEAR BUT ME! WHY ARE THEY KEEPING ME IN THIS ISOLATION BOOTH- THE LAST PERSON ALIVE ON EARTH!
featuring
SECRET of the LAST EARTHMAN!

STRANGE ADVENTURES #111 *(Dec 1959): Shows another of the alien invasions that DC provided in such profusion. "Secret of the Last Earthman" is almost as gritty as today's comics- we nuke the buggers right out of the sky... epc*

Unknown issues and is a must-have item for any aficionado of DC sci-fi.

Sid Greene was around in the early Golden Age; I have an issue of *Target* from 1942 with his work on the "Targeteers". He was also at Atlas in the pre-code fifties helping the fantasy factory turn out their strange and uncanny tales. I have a post-code *Mystic* (#42 Dec 1955) with a five page sci-fi by Greene (a worthwhile atom bomb blast story) that looks almost exactly like his DC style. And his work at DC continued past the ten-cent era, most notably on the "Star Rovers" series. Other highlights of his from the 1959/1960 zone include a 10 page space yarn in *Mystery In Space* #55 and another nine page time travel tale in *Strange Adventure* #114. And I must mention a personal favorite from *Strange Adventures* #141, a twelve-cent issue, "Gran'pa Fights a Space War". This one also features characters, especially the old man, who seem to be drawn from real life...

I want to finish with a few words on *Strange Adventures*. By my count this was the longest running science fiction comic, spanning 24 years from 1950 through 1973. Also the 244 issues published seems to be a record as well. This was the home of DC's neglected pre- Silver hero, Captain Comet, during the pre-code years, and in the early 1960's the Atomic Knights held court there. Later Animal Man and Deadman carried the torch. In some of the last issues Atomic Knights reprints were paired with Adam Strange reprints from *Mystery In Space*, and in many ways those issues are among the finest ever. But the whole run was well sustained; this was unquestionably DC's premier science fiction title.

ABOVE

STRANGE ADVENTURES #113 (FEB 1960): *Sports a cover by Gil Kane, another of DC's top SF artists. The "Deluge" story itself is a disappointment that side steps reality with a wishful thinking solution to the problem of nuclear waste.* ©DC

LEFT

MYSTERY IN SPACE #58 (MAR 1960) : *Features "Chariot in the Sky", one of the best Adam Strange yarns. Our man on Rann battles some antique aliens who once visited Earth and inspired the myths of Jupiter, Apollo, and Hercules.* ©DC

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Hope for the comic addict: Recovery

Susie tried to keep herself on an even keel as she talked to her husband's best friend, Jim. "Thanks for talking, Jim," she said. "I-I didn't know where else to turn..." her voice broke.

Jim was concerned. "What could be that bad between you and Charlie?" he queried.

"It's those books," Susie sobbed. "Those idiotic comic books. Charlie and I used to have such a great relationship. We had fun, took trips with the kids—and now, it's like I don't even know him anymore!"

Jim, somewhat of a collector himself, was sympathetic. "I know how that can be, Susie. That musty old-book smell has driven many a good man absolutely crazy. Just how bad is Charlie's condition?"

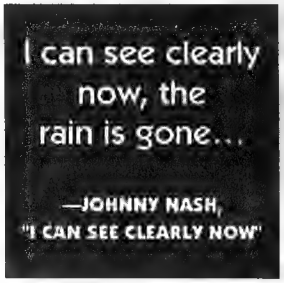
"Recently, not good," the suffering spouse replied. "For a while, things were leveling out a bit. Then he found out about some recently unearthed collection. I think it was the Mile Long Bethlehem Mountain collection. And he's been gone four days looking at it."

Jim's eyes popped out. "Did you say the M.L.B.M? I thought that was in some guy's vault for the next century! Quick, Susie—give me the address he's at! I've got to get in on this one! Blazing cover colors! Pristine staples! Blinding white pages! Blinding white pages! Blinding white pages!"

Susie watched as Jim ran out the door to his car, chanting, "Blinding white pages" like a mantra. She felt hopeless. It was like an epidemic, this collector's mania. Who would be struck next? Where to turn? What could she do?

Whether you are a comic book collector, a collector's spouse or a collector's friend, this scenario may have been familiar to you in some fashion. A healthy hobby runs amuck, and destroys everything in its path. In the last two "Comics on the Couch" columns in Comic Book Marketplace, we presented the definition of a comic book addict (Issue #11), and that of a comic book codependent (Issue #13)—someone who, out of love for the addict, enables his behavior to get worse. And over time, the attachment begins to deteriorate as the harmless hobby grows and mutates into something much worse.

In this article, we provide hope for those who are caught in the deadly comic addict/comic codependent relationship struggle. You may have realized that you qualify as a comic addict (for purposes of this article, a "comicad"). Or you may understand that you're a comic codependent ("comico"). Either way, you'll now find our ten-step program for recovery from this problem. As these steps are followed, you move closer and closer to a life of freedom, enjoyment and relationship. The steps are:

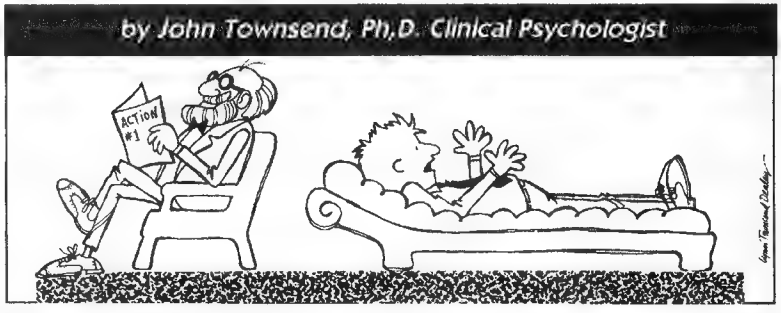


1. The comico comes out of denial. Generally speaking, nothing happens until someone close to the comicad begins to see the danger signals. That's because the comicad is caught in a helpless haze of desire and ecstasy. He simply can't see past his out-of control addiction. He rationalizes the time spent away from family and work by saying, "I need a break every now and then." He excuses the money spent by telling himself, "It's an investment."

So it's up to the comico. This is a problem in itself. For one thing, comicos don't generally read CBM. The comicad understands at some level that if he were to allow his significant other to read about the help within these pages, there might be conflict.

It's getting better, however. I have talked to many collectors, dealers and their spouses around the country. And the less defensive the comicad, the more the comico has a chance to see these articles. As one collector told me, "I know I don't have a problem. Why shouldn't she read these articles?" And his denial system was her very opportunity to read up on the comicad problem—and they have since gotten help.

So, the comico needs to see the symptoms. Your addict friend is just that—an addict. He keeps a pager at night for important buys. He has a briefcase fax to send updated want lists to dealers every other day. He has everything sent to his office, so the home folks won't see the volume of mailing he's involved in (a dealer friend of mine clued me in on this last point). His jargon is unintelligible to the non-comic collector, with phrases like, "post-post Golden Age derivatives found in pre-pre Silver Age etymological materials." And he looks at you expectantly, waiting for you to understand.



Come out of denial. Look at your friend and realize the fact that "I live with an emotionally absent, uninvolved zombie who has another life." It will hurt, but the truth is always your friend. It's the first step on the road to recovery.

2. False solutions. Generally, the comico wants to help. And thinks that she can actually get the comicad to stop overusing. She tries to "love him out of it." That's simply a license to continue. She tries the "silent treatment," hoping that the addict will feel guilty and stop. It doesn't work. Then she uses her ace in the hole: nagging. It feels better, because it's more active. However, it simply teaches the comicad to hide—and pretend more cleverly.

Take heart, however, comico. These false solutions help you be more open to the helpful answers. Desperate people are the best learners.

3. The comico gets help for him/herself. Finally, the comico realizes that before the addict can be changed, the comico has to see how he or she contributes to the problem. The comico joins a support group for this purpose, such as Comic Codependents Anonymous (Comicanon), which helps the non-addict to understand the addiction. The comico feels supported, accepted and connected.

Additionally, the members provide the comico with feedback on how her enabling is making the problem worse. Though many participants felt ashamed of even being comic codependents, it's a warm atmosphere. In fact, being a failure in fixing your addict is a requirement for membership in Comicanon. It's your club card. People without a problem just don't fit in.

4. The comico sets boundaries with the comicad. Using the support of the Comicanon groups, the comico begins the difficult step of intervening on the comicad. She sees where she hasn't set boundaries where she has needed to, and begins to repair that. Just like parents who decide to stop financing a teenage son's drug problem, the comico stops helping the addict stay comfortable, and stay in denial. By beginning to set boundaries, she helps someone who doesn't feel they have a problem—to have a problem.

Here are a few examples of helpful limits to set:

-becoming more involved in the family finances, to see where the money's going. Don't look at the $1500 in monthly ATM withdrawals and believe that it's gas and fast-food lunches. It isn't. - not staying home alone when the addict is book hunting during all off-times. Get a life! Find a hobby! A sport! A talent! Coming home to an empty house is often helpful to the addict. It helps him feel lonely, and miss the relationship.

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– not staying home alone when the addict is bookhunting during all off-times. Get a life! Find a hobby! A sport! A talent! Coming home to an empty house is often helpfur to the addict. It helps him feel lonely, and miss the relationship.

– having an intervention group address the addict. This powerful approach involves having the comicad's closest relationships sit in a circle around him, and tell him how his addictive behavior has hurt or embarrassed them. This confrontive group can be made up of the spouse, children, best friend, boss, co-workers and anyone else who matters to the comicad. Intervention groups are often quite painful. One recovering comicad told me, "What really got me out of my denial was my teenage daughter's intervention. She told me how much it had hurt her when I kicked her out of her bedroom and made her live on the living room sofa for three years. I needed the storage space for comics. I had no idea that it affected her like that. Guess I just wasn't sensitive enough." Indeed.

5. The comicad comes out of denial. This is a breakthrough. The lights go on for the comicad, and he realizes he does have a problem. He is a broken person. He now lives in reality. He takes responsibility for the fact that his hobby is out of control. The confrontations, consistent limits and the interventions have done their job.

6. The comicad admits he needs help. This is a tricky point. Many comics collectors have a pretty strong Lone Ranger mentality. They are self-sufficient critters who like solving their own problems alone. They have great difficulty asking for help.

But this is a necessary step. No addiction can be licked without help. If that were true, there would be no addictions. Comics addictions are no different. Yet, you'll hear lots of rationales here, such as, "I can beat this alone. Why, it wasn't that bad—I never even went on time payments but once or twice." Comicos, pay attention here! Insist that the limits you've established stay firm—unyielding—until the comicad takes that crucial step of finding help.

7. Through support and help, the comicad gets his real needs met. All addictions are a counterfeit way of getting our real needs met. The counseling or CA group can help the comicad discover what pain or loss the habit is medicating—and help him get the needs met in a healthy way. Some of those needs have been dealt with in earlier Couch articles in CBM: bonding (Issue #7), separateness (Issue #8), resolving good and bad (Issue #9) and adulthood (Issue #10).

This crucial step helps the recovering comicad to move past the painful "white knuckling stage" of passing up a Brave and Bold #34 in VF/NM at 1.0 guide—when he actually can't afford the book. Instead of feeling panicked and depressed, however, he is able to say "no" and grieve his loss—and go on his way. He is no longer a slave to the hobby. The hobby has become the servant, not the master.

8. The comicad begins to enjoy his hobby for healthy reasons. The recoverer "rediscovers" comic collecting. He actually reads the books. He wonders at the artwork, the writing, the character development and plots. He goes back into the honeymoon period of collecting that captured him when he was a kid.

9. The comicad invites, but doesn't push his spouse to participate in his hobby. Recovery from addiction means that the collector can accept his spouse's differences. He doesn't insist that she inherit his hobby, any more than she should expect him to run marathons or knit. They appreciate and support each other's differences and individual tastes. He sits in bed at night and shows her great Kirby and Toth covers. She oohs and ahhs—and shows him her latest guns and ammo catalog.

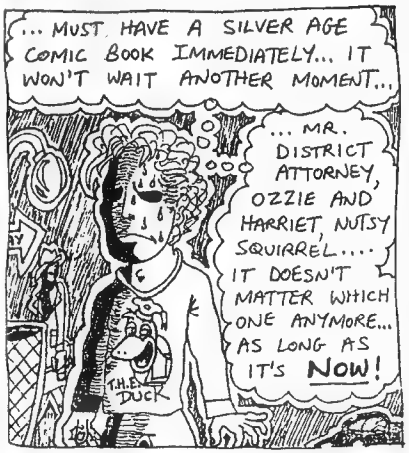
10. The comicad and comico help others who are struggling. We need to give back what we're given. The recoverers help people they see who are trapped in the same problem. They start sponsoring their own Comicanon or CA groups. They become a resource for comics crises in their areas. They get an 800 hotline number. They have come full circle in their comics recovery.

These ten steps can help you stay an avid collector—and yet have a life of attachment, meaning, purpose and balance. All the best in your journey.

Next time: Condition-Consciousness: pursuit of excellence... or obsessive-compulsive pathology? See you then.

The Fandom Zone

Alan Dulfon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# 6	VG/F	(Btm. staple has rust)	$190.00	# 51	VF	(2nd Kingpin) Very nice!	$ 60.00
# 7	F/VF	w/light stamp on logo	$200.00	# 53	VF	(Doctor Octopus)	$ 27.00
# 8	Fine	Very colorful book, bright!	$165.00	# 54	F/VF	w/ small corner chip	$ 18.00
# 9	VF	Flat, clean, glossy & bright	$350.00	# 55	VF-	(Doctor Octopus)	$ 25.00
# 10	F/VF	w/small edge chip	$200.00	# 59	VF	(Only S.A. Mary Jane cover)	$ 27.00
# 14	VF	Clean, flat, sharp & glossy!	$675.00	# 66	VF	Clean "white cover"	$ 17.00
# 16	VF	w/light store stamp. Clean!	$135.00	# 69	VF+	w/arrival date. Beautiful!	$ 19.00
# 19	Fine+	(Interior defect-call me)	$ 65.00	# 70	VF/NM	Excellent book, superior	$ 22.00
# 22	VF	Really nice, you'll love it!	$100.00	# 71	VF-	w/small edge chip	$ 16.00
# 23	VG/F	(3rd Green Goblin)	$ 65.00	# 73	VF	w/arrival date	$ 17.00
# 25	VF	Excellent, beautiful book	$115.00	# 74	VF+	Exceptional book	$ 19.00
# 26	Fine+	(4th Goblin; Crime Master)	$ 70.00	# 75	VF	w/arrival date	$ 17.00
# 28	VG/F	(Nice off-white pages!)	$ 55.00	# 76	F/VF	Nice, very attractive!	$ 14.00
# 32	VF	Quite attractive	$ 60.00	# 77	VF-	(Lizard, Torch x-over)	$ 16.00
# 33	VF	Classic Ditko. Nice!	$ 60.00	# 78	VF	Glossy & bright	$ 17.00
# 36	Fine+	(1st "Meteor Man")	$ 35.00	# 79	VF-	(Last sixties issue)	$ 16.00

AN IMPORTANT NOTE TO FELLOW COLLECTORS:

Hello, my name is Craig Rader. During my last several years as a collector, I have continually focused upon the area of grading and condition in my comic collecting endeavors. On an almost daily basis, I have worked and practiced to refine my ability at grading books. Despite others' perceptions of me as being extremely strict and rigid in my grading, I will never compromise my personal standards in evaluating a book. Grading books just for fun in the privacy of one's home is one thing, but grading them with the intent of selling them to fellow collectors is an ethical responsibility of paramount importance in our hobby. I am philosophically aligned with *Overstreet* standards. I love an accurately graded Fine+. I think an accurately graded VF is a beautiful thing. Also, better to downgrade a book than to risk overgrading it. And now as I proceed to sell my books to others, I will continually strive to be collector-oriented as well as customer-oriented. I will treat you as I would like to be treated as a collector. Order with confidence.

SILVER AGE MARVELS

TALES OF SUSPENSE

# 75	VF	(The Freak, c&s Iron Man)	$ 23.00
# 76	VF	(Cap vs. Batroc)	$ 23.00
# 79	VF	(Sub-Mariner c&s)	$ 23.00
# 81	VF	(Iron Man-Titanium Man)	$ 23.00
# 82	VF	(Cap vs. Adaptoid)	$ 23.00
# 86	VF	Glossy & bright	$ 23.00
# 87	VF	(Iron Man vs. Mole Man)	$ 23.00
# 89	VF+	(Iron Man vs. Melter)	$ 26.00
# 92	VF	(1st Nick Fury/Shield x-over)	$ 23.00
# 93	VF	(Iron Man-Titanium Man)	$ 23.00

TALES TO ASTONISH

# 71	F/VF	Very attractive book	$ 17.00
# 78	VF-	(Subby vs. Puppet Master)	$ 20.00
# 79	VF+	(Hulk battles Hercules)	$ 24.00
# 88	VF w/Marvel edge	(Sub-Mariner vs. Attuma; Hulk & Boomerang)	$ 21.00

DAREDEVIL

# 17	Fine	Pretty book (Spider-Man)	$ 30.00
# 19	F/VF	(Gladiator & Marauder)	$ 23.00
# 33	Fine+	Very nice (Beetle)	$ 11.00
#100	F/VF	Anniversary Issue	$ 12.00
#158	VF+	1st Frank Miller	$ 40.00

FANTASTIC FOUR

# 61	F/VF	(Sand Man, Surfer app.)	$ 15.00
# 69	F/VF	(Mad Thinker)	$ 15.00

STRANGE TALES

#118	Fine	(Torch w/ F.F. x-over)	$ 15.00
#144	VF	(Dr. Strange vs. Druid)	$ 15.00
#148	F/VF	Has yellowing, o/w VF	$ 15.00
#149	VF	Nice off-white pages	$ 15.00
#150	VF-	Colorful, very attractive	$ 14.00
#154	VF w/Marvel edge		$ 15.00
#157	Fine+	Steranko c/a	$ 11.00
#158	VF	Steranko art	$ 15.00
#159	Fine	Steranko c/a, Cap x-over	$ 14.00
#160	Fine	Steranko art	$ 10.00

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY

#115	F/VF	(Origin, Loki) Very nice!	$ 24.00
#118	Fine+	(Destroyer) Small, faded date stamp, b.c.	$ 16.00
#120	F/VF	Pretty book, colorful	$ 21.00

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES (1968)

# 14	VF w/small chip	Excellent eye appeal; very pretty book. Non-reprint Spider-Man story; great Golden Age reprints.	$ 55.00

NICK FURY, AGENT OF SHIELD (1968)

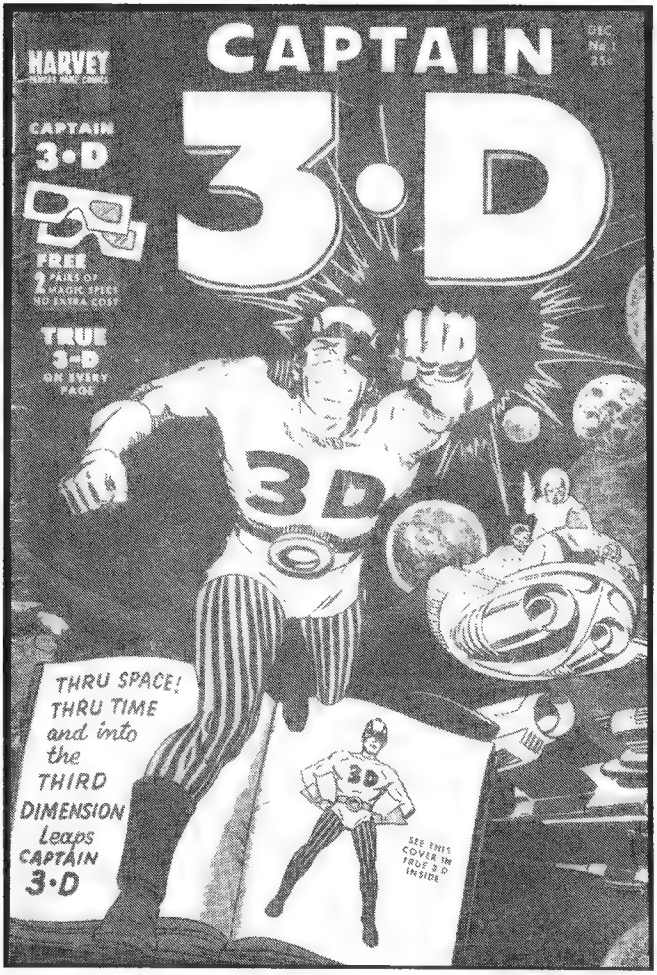
# 2	VF+	Steranko c/a, stunning!	$ 20.00
# 4	VF	Steranko-c. Clean & bright	$ 16.00

THIS MONTH'S TRIVIA QUESTION:

What ever happened to little Kurrgo from Planet X? You know, the hairy little fellow with the two-foot head and three-foot body, trudging up and down the pages of *Fantastic Four #7*, pondering the fate of his doomed planet. The last time I saw Kurrgo, he was lying draped over a barrel amid the destruction of his empire, calling out one last time in desperation for help while the F.F. themselves were blasting off in a spaceship for the return home to beloved Earth. Does anyone know what happened to that malevolent and vituperative little guy?

MEN OF MYSTERY

by Jeff Gelb



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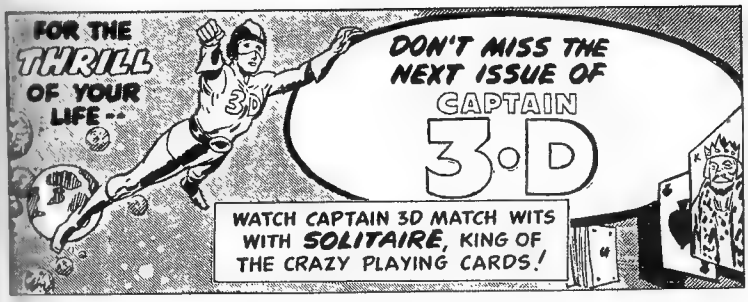
Captain 3-D

I first read Captain 3-D as a kid, borrowing someone's dog-eared copy and spending the next hour in utter amazement. To my recollection, this was my first 3-D comic experience. Imagine seeing Jack Kirby in 3-D as your first 3-D comic book reading experience. The event changed my life - I tried to draw my own 3-D comics, and immediately started collecting any 3-D comics I could find. I have many now, some with better 3-D, some with better art, but none that pack the wallop of that one issue of Captain 3-D. What's especially nice about this title, by the way, is its availability. Apparently, the 3-D comic boom of the '50s died just as this book was aborning, which led to warehouses full of Harvey 3-D titles that never sold. Even today, you can find their 3-D books, which are all worthwhile, fairly cheap. You can't go wrong picking up a copy of Captain 3-D.

This was the only 3-D book created by Simon and Kirby, and while it has been reported that Kirby had difficulty with the cumbersome layers of acetate it took to create 3-D comic art, certainly there was no better comic artist to bring 3-D to life than Kirby, who was used to flying limbs and bodies off the pages of comics in his many Golden Age odysseys.

His artwork translates brilliantly to the 3-D process, and even though Harvey only utilized four levels of depth, the illusion of more depth than was actually on the page (helped by the use of shading techniques) was complete. This was literally a comic book to fall into. Page after page, Kirby, who must have laughed as he drew them, had scenes of fists, bodies, and machinery being flung outside panel borders and into readers' faces. The result was breath-taking. To a teen-ager, comics simply didn't get better than this! The book held up story-wise as well, telling of a secret book that contained characters on its pages who could be brought to life by using the 3-D glasses that came with the book. But along with the book's champion of justice, came the other one dimensional bad guys... a race of cat-like people, who were locked into eternal battle with Captain 3-D, the last of his race. It was exciting stuff, brought to life literally by the 3-D process.

An ad for Captain 3-D (with non-Kirby art) that ran in another Harvey 3-D title at the time asked the question, "Who is Infinity?" Unfortunately, we'll never know. Was he to be another Harvey 3-D super hero, or a villain in Captain 3-D? Perhaps the answer lies in the completed, but never printed, pages of Captain 3-D #2 or #3! It must have been disappointing to Harvey's publishers to watch their 3-D investment fizzle just when Simon & Kirby had given the format its first super hero. In fact, it has been reported that two additional issues of Captain 3-D were produced but never marketed (comics historian Greg Theakston reportedly has pencils from one of


FOR THE THRILL OF YOUR LIFE --
DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE OF
CAPTAIN 3-D
WATCH CAPTAIN 3D MATCH WITS WITH SOLITAIRE, KING OF THE CRAZY PLAYING CARDS!

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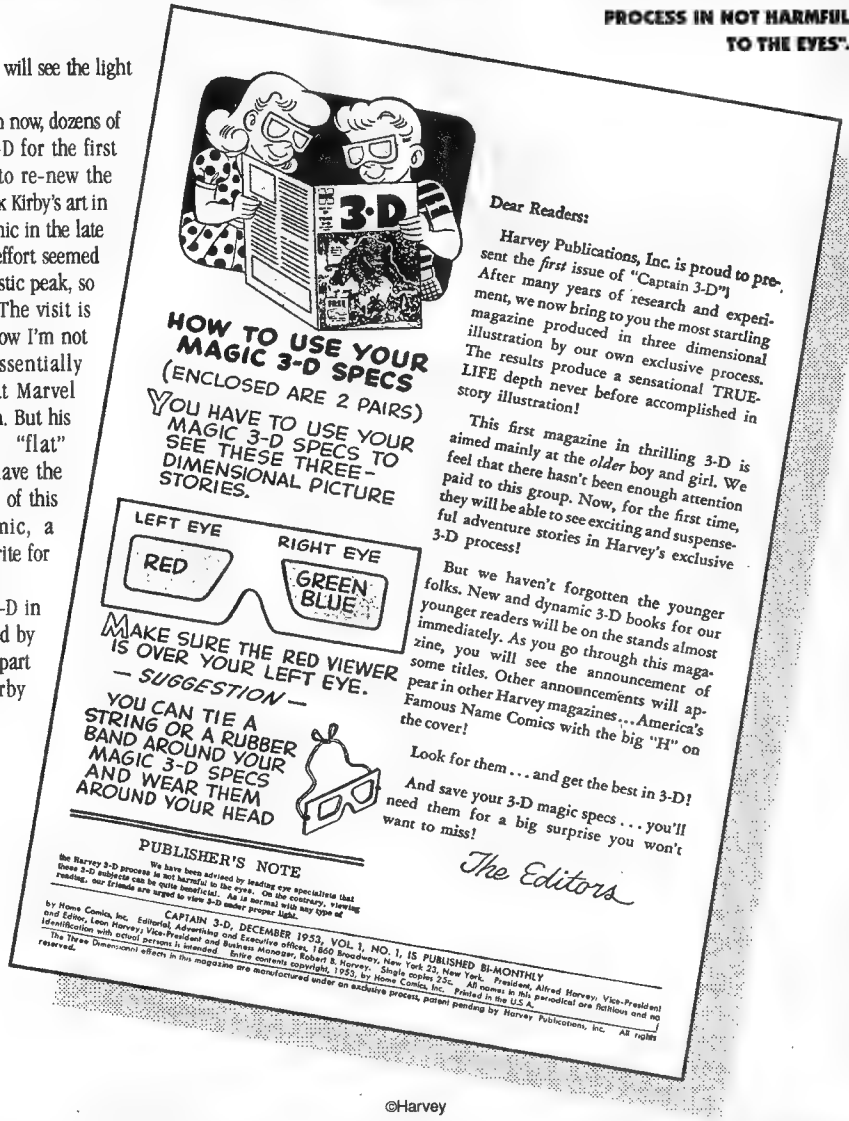
ON FACING PAGE: THE COVER OF CAPTAIN 3-D #1 (DEC 1953) LEFT- A TEASER AD FROM THE INSIDE BACK COVER. BELOW- THE INSIDE FRONT COVER WITH SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE "MAGIC 3-D SPECS", A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS ABOUT THE HARVEY LINE-UP OF TITLES, AND THE PUBLISHERS NOTE REASSURING READERS THAT "THE HARVEY3-D PROCESS IN NOT HARMFUL TO THE EYES".

them and perhaps someday they will see the light of day).

Meanwhile, I find myself, even now, dozens of years after reading Captain 3-D for the first time, returning to the book to re-new the exciting experience of seeing Jack Kirby's art in 3-D. (Kirby did another 3-D comic in the late '70s, but, by comparison, the effort seemed farther from Kirby's earlier artistic peak, so for me the thrill was gone.) The visit is rewarding every time, and I know I'm not alone here. Roy Thomas essentially reincarnated Captain 3-D at Marvel during the '70s as the 3-D Man. But his two-dimensional, literally "flat" adventures, didn't begin to have the excitement found in the pages of this very special 1953 3-D comic, a nostalgic Men Of Mystery favorite for all time.

Kirby returned to Captain 3-D in 1984 for this illustration, inked by Greg Theakston, which became part of the cover to the Jack Kirby Treasury Vol. 2.


3-D
HOW TO USE YOUR MAGIC 3-D SPECS
(ENCLOSED ARE 2 PAIRS)
YOU HAVE TO USE YOUR MAGIC 3-D SPECS TO SEE THESE THREE-DIMENSIONAL PICTURE STORIES.
LEFT EYE
RED
RIGHT EYE
GREEN BLUE
MAKE SURE THE RED VIEWER IS OVER YOUR LEFT EYE.
— SUGGESTION —
YOU CAN TIE A STRING OR A RUBBER BAND AROUND YOUR MAGIC 3-D SPECS AND WEAR THEM AROUND YOUR HEAD
Dear Readers:
Harvey Publications, Inc. is proud to present the first issue of "Captain 3-D"! After many years of research and experiment, we now bring to you the most startling magazine produced in three dimensional illustration by our own exclusive process. The results produce a sensational TRUE-LIFE depth never before accomplished in story illustration!
This first magazine in thrilling 3-D is aimed mainly at the older boy and girl. We feel that there hasn't been enough attention paid to this group. Now, for the first time, they will be able to see exciting and suspenseful adventure stories in Harvey's exclusive 3-D process!
But we haven't forgotten the younger folks. New and dynamic 3-D books for our younger readers will be on the stands almost immediately. As you go through this magazine, you will see the announcement of some titles. Other announcements will appear in other Harvey magazines ... America's Famous Name Comics with the big "H" on the cover!
Look for them ... and get the best in 3-D!
And save your 3-D magic specs ... you'll need them for a big surprise you won't want to miss!
The Editors
PUBLISHER'S NOTE
We have been advised by leading eye specialists that the Harvey 3-D process is not harmful to the eyes. On the contrary, viewing these 3-D subjects can be quite beneficial. As is normal with any type of reading, our friends are urged to view 3-D under proper light.
CAPTAIN 3-D, DECEMBER 1953, VOL. 1, NO. 1, IS PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY by Home Comics, Inc. Editorial, Advertising and Executive offices, 1860 Broadway, New York 23, New York. President, Alfred Harvey, Vice-President and Editor, Leon Harvey; Vice-President and Business Manager, Robert B. Harvey. Single copies 25c. All names in this periodical are fictitious and no identification with actual persons is intended. Entire contents copyright, 1953, by Home Comics, Inc. Printed in the U.S.A.
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BATLASH..#6 vg+ 1.50
BATMAN..#5 1/8" cvr side tear & ½" repaired tear bk cvr ow fn+-nm 1,500.00
#17 sm tear bottom cvr ow vg+-fn 250.00
#21 pencil initials bottom cvr ow fn+-nm 560.00
#22 vy, vy light almost unnoticeable ctr crease ow nm 595.00
#22 long diag. crease ow fn 240.00
#26 light center crease bk cvr ow nm 650.00
#26 fn-nm 450.00
#35 ½" tear rt cvr edge & slt wrinkle in cvr ow nm 400.00
#36 pencil arrival mark ow nm 400.00
#86 fn - 120.00; #107 g 20.00
#164 vg+-fn - 13.00; #165 fn, #166 fn 16.00
#168 vg+ 11.00
#170 sm pc tape at top staple ow vg 7.00
#172 vg+-fn 9.50
#183 loose at top staple ow fn+ 9.00
#184 vg 7.00
#184 loose at bottom staple ow vg+ 5.00
#186 g-vg - 3.00; #189 vg 4.00
#204 loose at bottom staple ow fn-nm 6.00
#205 fn - 4.50; #209 vg 3.00
#215 fn+ - 5.00; #216 fn 4.50
#224 vg+-fn - 3.50; #226 fn+ 4.00
#226 sev sm tears bk cvr ow fn 3.50
#229 fn+-nm - 6.50; #232 nm 22.00
#234 nm - 35.00; #237 vg+-fn 8.00
#242 fn+-nm 6.50
#246 sm date stamp ow fn 3.50
#248 fn+-nm - 6.50; #251 m 35.00
#252 nm 8.00
#254 tiny hole at staple ow nm 7.00
#255 ½" tear bk cvr ow nm 14.00
#398 m (Catwoman cvr & story) 4.50
#399 m (Catwoman) - 4.50; #401 m 3.50
BATMAN-THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS..Book 1, m 40.00
Book 1 second printing, m 10.00
Book 2 - m - 20.00; Book 3, m 10.00
Book 4, m 8.00
BAT MASTERSON..FC 1013 off white pgs ow nm 35.00
FC 1013 fn - 17.00; FC 1013 vg-fn 12.00
#2 fn-nm - 17.00; #3 fn+-nm 18.00
#3 vg - 7.50; #4 nm-m 27.00
#4 ¼" cvr tear ow nm 22.00
#4 vg-fn - 8.00; #5 nm, #6 nm 25.00
#7 nm, #8 nm, #9 nm 25.00
#9 1" tear at bottom staple ow fn-nm 5.50
BATTLE ACTION..#17 vg 2.50
BATTLE BRADY..#13 vg 3.50
BATTLEFIELD, WAR ADVS. ON THE..#4 ½" tear top cvr ow fn+ 7.00
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BEEP BEEP THE ROAD RUNNER..#58 nm-m 2.00
BEETLE BAILEY..#8 fn, #38 nm 7.00
BEN & ME..FC 539 vg 3.00
BEN BOWIE AND HIS MOUNTAIN MEN..#17 m 10.00
BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES..GK Movie with poster, nm-m 25.00
THE BEST OF UNCLE SCROOGE & DONALD DUCK..#1 vg 8.00
BIG SHOT..#34 fn+-nm 40.00
#53 fn+ 18.00
BILL BARNES, AMERICA'S AIR ACE..#5 1" corner crease ow fn+-nm 80.00
BILL ELLIOTT..FC 278 ink name on cvr g+-vg 10.00
BLACK CAT..#9 fn+-nm (origin Stuntman) 80.00
#20 light tanning bottom pgs ow fn+-nm 45.00
#63 fn+-nm 26.00
#64 light tan pgs ow fn-nm 20.00
BLACKHAWK..#11 vf 225.00
#50 vg-fn - 37.00; #79 fn+-nm 61.00
#117 vg+-fn - 15.00; #134 vg 6.50
#137 ½" cvr tear ow fn-nm 15.00
#153 vg+ - 4.50; #154 fn 6.50
#155 fn+ - 7.00; #159 vg 4.00
#161 fn - 6.50; #162 vg-fn 4.50
#163 fn-nm - 8.00; #200 vg 1.50
#207 fn - 2.00; #208 vg-fn, #221 vg 1.50
#222 vg+ 1.50
#224 center crease ow vg-fn 2.00
#235 vg-fn 2.00
#243 sm pc out bk cvr edge & sev pgs ow fn 1.50
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#4 tiny nick out bottom cvr ow fn 75.00
#5 sm date stamp top cvr ow fn+ 85.00
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BLAZING SIXGUNS..#1 vg 14.00
Super Reprint #12 fair 3.50
BLONDE PHANTOM..#15 fn+ 100.00
#17 fn-nm, #18 fn-nm 130.00
#19 fn+-nm 160.00
#19 sm nick off bottom sp ow fn+ 85.00
BLONDIE..#3 vg - 7.50; #4 g+-vg 6.50
BLUE BOLT..v6 #4 fn+-nm 11.00
v 8 #8 vg+-fn 7.00
BOBBY BENSON'S B-BAR-B RIDERS..#5 fn-nm 27.00
BOB COLT..#3 1½" cor crease ow fn+ 35.00
BOMBA..#1 vg-fn 4.50
BONANZA..#8 nm-m 26.00
#22 vg-fn - 3.50; #25 fn+-nm 8.50
#36 light 5" & 3" cor creases ow fn+ 4.00
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#3 neat name stamp on cvr ow vg 275.00
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#95 ½" cor crease ow fn+-nm 5.00
#104 fn-nm 3.50
#133 vy sm cor crease ow nm 4.50

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BRINGING UP FATHER..FC 37 ½" tear cvr edge & some pgs ow vg-fn 29.00
BROKEN ARROW..FC 855 vg-fn 6.50
THE BROWNIES..FC 192 light browning inside cvr edges & light tan pgs ow nm 65.00
FC 436 fn+-nm - 11.00; FC 482 vg-fn 5.50
BUCCANEERS..#23 sm date stamp ow fn+-nm 75.00
BUCK ROGERS..(Famous Funnies)..#5 fn+ 175.00
BUCK ROGERS.(Toby)..#100 fn+ 55.00
BUCKSKIN..FC 1011 nm 38.00
BUFFALO BILL JR..#9 nm, #10 nm, #11 m 16.00
#1 (GK).¼" cut bottom cvr ow fn+ 4.50
BUGS BUNNY..#28 sm cvr tear ow fn+ 4.50
#46 4" diag. crease bk cvr ow fn-nm 4.00
#48 vg 1.50
#51 ¼" cor off cvr ow fn-nm, #175 m 3.00
#208 m - 3.00; #210 nm, #222 nm 2.50
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FC 724 fn 5.00
BUGS BUNNY CHRISTMAS PARTY..#6 vg+-fn 13.00
BUGS BUNNY COMIC ALBUM..#10 nm-m 7.00
BULLETMAN..#2 light vertical crease left of center ow nm 495.00
#7 4½" cor crease ow fn+ 150.00
#8 vy light rust on staples & sm store name stamp bk cvr ow nm 250.00
#9 fn+ 140.00
#11 sm A in circle stamped rt side of cvr ow fn+-nm 175.00
#12 fn+ 120.00
BULLWINKLE & ROCKY.(GK)..#16 nm-m 7.00
BUSTER BROWN..#34 vg - 12.00; #36 g 6.00
BUSTER BUNNY..#7 vg-fn 2.50
#10 fn-nm - 4.50; #10 fn 3.00
#16 fn+-nm 5.00
BUSTER CRABBE..#12 sev vy sm tears bottom bk cvr ow fn+-nm 28.00
BUTCH CASSIDY.(Avon)..#1 sm nick out rt cvr edge ow nm 52.00
BUZ SAWYER..#3 nm 37.00
BUZZY..#66 vg-fn - 2.50; #75 fn-nm 6.50
CAPT. AERO..v 2 #8 ¼" cor off cvr & co ow vg 11.00
CAPT. AMERICA.(Timely)..#12 vg-fn 295.00
#15 2" cor crease upper rt cvr & 1" x ½" pc tape inside cvr edge & "4 x 10" stamped in M of logo ow fn 310.00
CAPT. AMERICA.(Marvel)..#109 sm water stain left cvr not noticeable on front ow fn+-nm 30.00
#111 sm date stamp on cvr ow vf-nm 40.00
#116 fn+-nm - 10.00; #117 vg+-fn 6.00
#118 vg+-fn - 4.50; #119 fn+-nm 10.00
#120 fn - 5.00; #121 fn+-nm 7.00
#124 ½" tear top cvr ow fn 3.50
#124 vg-fn - 2.50; #126 fn+, #127 fn+ 4.50
#127 fn, #129 fn 4.00
#129 vg-fn - 3.00; #130 fn+-nm 6.00
#131 fn - 3.50; #132 fn+ 4.50
#133 fn - 4.00; #134 fn+-nm 6.00
#134 vg+-fn - 3.00; #135 fn 3.50
#136 fn+-nm, #137 fn-nm 6.00
#142 fn+-nm, #143 fn+-nm 4.50
#155 fn+-nm - 4.00; #322 m 3.00
#323 nm 4.00
CAPT. BATTLE..#3 sm pc off lower rt cvr ow g-vg 30.00
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CAPT. CANUCK..#1 & #2 in unopened collectors pack, m 5.00
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CAPT. FEARLESS..#2 3" cor crease ow fn-nm 90.00
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#24 sm water stain lower left ow g+-vg 38.00
#30 some pgs cut off register with irregular edges ow fn 35.00
#33 nick ½" x ½" out top cvr at sp & bottom cvr ow vg+-fn 35.00
#35 fn+-nm 110.00
#37 light 2" cor crease ow fn 58.00
#38 two ½" cvr tears & 5" cor crease ow vg+-fn 30.00
#39 light vertical crease left of center ow vg-fn 37.00
#45 g-vg - 20.00; #49 vg-fn 32.00
#51 fn+-nm - 65.00; #51 vg+-fn 28.00
#51 vg-fn 25.00
#52 sm nick out bottom bk cvr sp ow fn-nm - 45.00; #54 g-vg 17.00
#62 vg 18.00
#69 sm light store name stamp top cvr ow fn-nm - 45.00; #74 vg-fn 28.00
#82 fn+, #83 fn+ 31.00
#96 "Special" & "Dr. Pepper" stamp on cvr ow vg-fn 9.00
#96 same as above except ow vg 6.00
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Mr. Sandman

Creig Flessel . . .

Golden Age legend

An interview by Charlie Roberts

Recent Sandman original art by Creig Flessel courtesy C. Roberts collection

Sandman ©DC

When I was around 13 or 14 in the late 1950's, I discovered a great used magazine store on 9th Street in Washington, D.C. My mother would drive me over from our home in Alexandria, VA and sit in the car out front as I wallowed and waded through stacks of old magazines crammed into the small store full of the smell and litter of old printed paper.

Comics with covers were three for 25 cents, coverless were six for a quarter. After several visits, I began asking the little old lady who ran the place if she had more comics. She would begin her long day's journey into night, shuffling S-L-O-W-L-Y downstairs to a basement lit by a 60 watt bulb where no customers were allowed.

Simultaneously, my mother would begin honking the car horn out front. My time in the place was limited to around 45 minutes, and paper route funds were limited to $2-$3. I recall one visit, equalled in my teenage mind only by W.W.II Nazi atrocities, when I had to leave the store before the old lady got back upstairs with the booty. To this day, I'm sure she was bringing up multiple copies of *Superman* #1, *Batman* #1, etc. ... in perfect shape. Seeing that I was gone, she no doubt used them to prop up a leg of a sagging table holding 30 years worth of *Readers Digest*. (I am against censorship in most cases, but I would gladly supply a match to help light a bonfire of *Readers Digest* and its evil companion the *Readers Digest Condensed Books*. These partners in crime have ruined many a good forest which could have supplied more comic books!)

A few of the comics I discovered at the shop were the early DC Comics. They were a great mixture of art, story and coloring. Exotic sounding names like Sven Elven and Clem Gretta produced art for stories that were sometimes in black and white, sometimes three and four color. The business of doing original material solely for comic books was brand new, and the pioneers were flying by the seats of their pants.

CREIG FLESSEL

Creig Flessel studied under illustrator Harvey Dunn, did some pulp illustration work, and joined the slowly growing comic book field in late 1936 working for what would become DC Comics.

I saw his name on lots of stories in those old coverless comics, but didn't realize the quality and scope of his covers until I bought Gerber's *Photo Journal Guide to Comic Books*. Creig Flessel brought comic book art to a higher level in the 1930s. Get the Gerber books and look at the covers of *Detective* 2-18, *Adventure* 15-46 and the early issues of *More Fun* and *Big Shot*. The best covers are by Creig Flessel.

(Interviewers note: The good news is that he will do color cover re-creations and black and white specialty pieces. Write him for prices, PLEASE DO NOT CALL. While he's in good health, he underwent major open heart surgery this past summer. I thank good friend David Siegel for helping me locate Mr. Flessel, Joan and Jen for transcription typing, but most of all Creig Flessel for all the enjoyment his 57 years in every aspect of published graphics has given us.)

©DC

©DC

It was an honor and a privilege to interview this fine artist and gentleman at his home, Sunday afternoon September 30, 1991.

Q: What year were you born Mr. Flessel?

A: 1912. February 2. I lived in the house I was born in for 16 years. It was an old farm house, five acres. We had cows, pigs and chickens. As I said, my father was a blacksmith; my mother had four children, and we had the chickens. You've heard of chicken money?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, we had the chicken money, and we had the pigs and the cows and my father being a blacksmith, he would bring home everything from goats to stray horses, things like that, and they'd be on the farm. I did cartoons in high school. Naturally, the school papers, sports cartoons. I was crazy about sports. I was

Top:
New Adventure Comics #29 (Aug 1938)

Bottom:
Adventure Comics #44 (Nov 1939)

the same height as I am now. I weighed about 150. I used to play a little football, a little basketball and track.

I went to art school in New York at "Grand Central" terminal. There is a high ceiling and there are paintings on the ceiling. It's a beautiful place. On the seventh floor they put in an art school. They had three or four rooms, and you know what I did? I was the bouncer. If you were a businessman during the '20s and '30s and you were in New York, the word got around, go over to track 17, take the elevator up to the seventh floor and go in and look at the nudes. What a better way to spend an afternoon!?! Then, get on your train and go home! When I got in there, the secretary told me they didn't give scholarships. It was 1930. She told me; "we need a bouncer". They used a card system to separate students from businessmen on lunch. I was the bouncer and janitor. The first year I was in there I was brown bagging my lunch. Everybody else was going to "Horn and Hardharts" and other restaurants. Spending 15 cents was a lot of money. The next year, everybody was brown bagging. It was the early '30s and the depression was really hitting hard in New York.

Q: What type artist did you want to be? Illustrator? Cartoonist?

A: Well, I don't know what I wanted to be. I didn't know anything about painting. I studied with the top man, Harvey Dunn. He taught me approaches to painting and why it is important. I studied with Charles DeFeo. He did a lot of stuff for *Liberty Magazine*. Here was a whole school for illustration, not realizing the illustration field was dying. Picture magazines (*Look, Life*) were coming in, and it was all over. You get an education and then you figure out how to survive. It's survival, and that's how I ended up doing comic books. I did have an advantage living close to New York City and could bring samples in to show editors. Other students lived elsewhere and weren't as fortunate.

Q: What was your first published work?

A: Pulp magazines, around 1934, 1935 for Street and Smith. You were only making around $5 to $10, but it was a great training ground. You had to do them fast with a split brush. Magazine illustrators could come back and do pulp illustrations and covers to get work.

Q: How did you get started in comic books?

A: An ad in the "Sunday Times" for, I think, *More Fun Comics*. They wanted artists, cartoonists,

"Sunday Times" for, I think, *More Fun Comics*. They wanted artists, cartoonists, anybody to do art, so I went in and met Vin Sullivan and Whitney Ellsworth. Major Nicholson was running in and out. You know the description of Major Nicholson. He was a major in the army in WWI. They went in to occupy Russia. Did you know we went in to occupy Russia? (Laughter) He married a lady in waiting to the Queen of Sweden. He was a pulp writer. He had a partner named Cook. They wanted to do original comic books. They started *Famous Funnies* reprinting comic strips of the day.

Q: Did you read comic books when they first appeared?

A: No. I really enjoyed Vic Forsythe and his "Joe Jinks" comic strip. He was the greatest. There was Burris Jenkins, a political cartoonist. My father brought home all the good magazines of the day: Saturday Evening Post with the Rockwell covers, etc.

Q: Were your parents artistic?

A: My mother was a musician, an organist and could paint. My aunt was an art teacher on my father's side.

Comics were a means to an end. I had to get food on the table. I look back at the early covers and some of them could have been better. I was getting $10 per cover, doing penciling and inking. When I got into advertising, I went from $5 a page to $300 per illustration.

Q: Tell us a little about the working conditions in the early comic book days.

A: Very sparse. There would be a fly-by-night secretary with a typewriter and a withered rose. Major Nicholson would be running in and out dodging the process servers. One room would be filled with unsold comic books. A couple of tables with T-squares. I brought in my own table and T-square. Whitney Ellsworth would maybe say, "We need a cover for *Adventure Comics*."

Q: Why would he ask you?

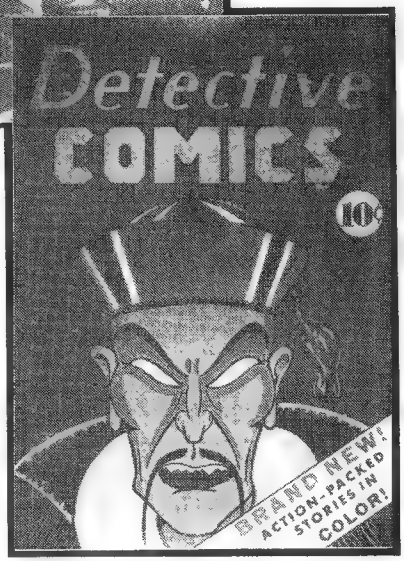
A: Well, I was the only one there. I'd been trained in the N.C. Wyeth, Howard Pyle type of adventure with Harvey Dunn's training. That's what I knew. It wasn't until a couple of guys came in from Cleveland, Ohio called Siegel and Shuster, that things changed. Shuster looked like Noriega. He was consumptive, he couldn't see. He was "Superman!"

Q: Did you think it was ridiculous?

A: Yeh. When you are brought up with "Dick Tracy," Caniff and "Terry and the Pirates," the evil Chinee, the gun, Pop Bang Pow! Here comes this guy from Krypton, it was simply mind-boggling. They needed something so they printed it. I had the advantage of being the only artist in the place. Whitney Ellsworth and Vin Sullivan were artists, but they were bogged down with editing.

Whitney Ellsworth wanted to go to Hollywood and his wife, Jane Dewey who became Jane Ellsworth, had a bit part in "Shenandoah" or something and her career died.

Q: How many years were you working at this comic office?



A: Late 1936, 1937 and by 1938 I was out of there working for "Johnston-Cushing." I kept in touch with them and still did stuff now and then.

Q: Who were your friends in the comic book business?

A: Fred Guardineer, Bill Ely, Tom Hickey, Sven Elven. I was a member of the "Society of Illustrators" still dreaming that I would do illustrations, not realizing that illustration per se was dead. I was fortunate that I could do black and white work where many of the big illustrators could only do paintings. They would expect $300 or $400, while the guys who came out of the comics could do anything.

That's what's hard to try to tell the kids today. You've got to be able to draw anything.

Q: You were getting $10 a cover and $5 a page for comic book work?

A: Yes, for pencilling, inking and writing the story.

Q: Were any covers ever rejected?

A: Yes. One was considered too gruesome. It had a skull-like

Top:
Adventure Comics #42 (Sep 1939)

Bottom:
Detective Comics #1 (Mar 1937) First comic book with Creig Flessel art.

face with a knife and they thought it was horrid.

Q: Would you rather have done covers or stories?

A: I didn't do enough thinking at the time. I just loved to draw. I didn't realize that the important thing was the story, as Will Eisner and Jerry Siegel proved. The important thing is to do a lot more thinking before you draw. In 1938 I was working with John Striebel. He was doing the "Dixie Dugan" comic strip and "Vic and Sade," a comic strip selling "Farina Wheat" for Johnston-Cushing. The idea was to polish my work for advertising, and I was doing all of the advertising for Striebel anyway. Striebel was important in my development. He taught me how to do fashion work; how coats fit, etc.

I got married in 1937, moved to Huntington in 1941 and bought this house in 1943. I did a lot of covers for *Pictorial Review*.

I did a four-panel strip that ran on the cover of *Playbill*. I also did the only comic strip that ran on the New York subway, "Our Town Oddities."

I did advertising work through the '40s into the '50s and the field was dying due to television. Publishers-Hall called to ask me to try out for the "David Crane" comic strip. Win Mortimer was leaving the strip. They sent me down to Atlanta, Georgia to meet the writer of the strip, Ed Dodd. Ed Dodd was the original outdoor man. He knew Dan Beard, went on pack trips, etc.

I did the strip for 12 years and it helped put my son through college. The years were 1960 to 1972.

1959-1960 were interesting. I ran into Jerry Capp, Elliot Caplin and Al Capp. "Li'l Abner" was being produced in Boston; Andy Amato was the idea and sketch man, and they didn't have anybody to draw a pretty girl. They went through Stan Drake and Frank Frazetta, and a whole slew of people.

They would fly me up to Boston once a month. I was pencilling the figures and doing the heads on the dailies and Sundays. Walter Johnson was the head inking man. There was Harvey Curtis and Andy Amato. Al Capp kept a very good secret of his assistants. Andy Amato created many of the characters. Not too many people know that.

It always amazed me that three different people could work together on one strip successfully.

I would work on the strip for a week and then fly home. I was after Lee Elias who was after Frank Frazetta.

Q: What was your last comic book work?

A: I worked on romance comics at DC with Joe Simon and Carmine Infantino. I also did a little work with Charlie Biro, Lev Gleason and Bob Wood on *Crime Does Not Pay*.

Q: Did you assist anyone else on comic strip work?

A: "Apt. 3-G." Andre LeBlanc and I did the strip while Alex Kotzky was in the hospital.

I taught at the School of Visual Arts for a while, and also taught water color here in town.

Q: Would you tell us a little more about your work for Johnston-Cushing over the years?

A: It started out with Tom Johnston and his brother Will Johnston, who was a cartoonist for the old *Evening World*, producing a show on Broadway called "Artists and Models." Jack Cushing, whose father invented the tracer bullet, bought into the company replacing a fellow named Walsh. I met all the artists there... Milt Gross, Al Dorne, Milton Caniff (who was doing "Mr. Coffee Nerves" with Noel Sickles), Stan Drake, and Dik Browne.

The agency would get an account who had bought space in the Sunday comics section. I was successful because I could draw in different styles. For instance, I would do "Betty Bite Size" in a cartoony style and then the "Trailer Twins" for Post Raisin Bran in a more serious style. I did "Eveready Flashlight True Stories" and "Nestles Tollhouse Cookies." Nothing was signed, and I wasn't in competition with myself due to the different styles I used in the art.

Q: So you went from $5 a page and $10 a cover in comic books to $300 and up for advertising art?

A rare high grade copy of Adventure Comics #40 (Jul 1939) The Sandman series begins. ©DC

A: It was mind-boggling, but I didn't get to do art every day. I worked for them from 1937 until the '60s, when it fell apart due to radio and TV.

Q: Which artist did you find exciting to meet as a young artist yourself?

A: I tried to meet Henry Raleigh with no success. Then I'm in Harvey Dunn's night class and there's everybody. Wednesday night they would come in for criticism. Mario Cooper, Harold Von Schmidt, all the big guys parading their work. It was pretty intimidating I'll tell you!

I joined the Illustrators Club after the war and met Charles Dana Gibson. The comic people would meet at the Lambs Club in New York.

Now there are groups all over the country. We have our group, "The Berndt Toast Gang" named after "Smitty" cartoonist Walter Berndt. We used to go to Veterans' Hospitals after World War II and do sketches. Al Jaffee, Tom Gill and others. I was on two U.S.O. tours.

Q: What are you most proud of having worked on in your career?

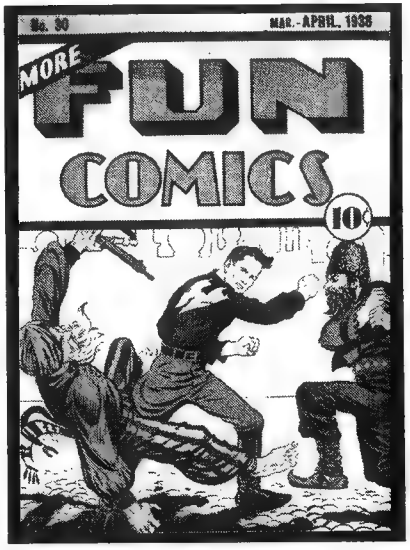
A: "Baron Von Firstinbed" for *Playboy*. You know, I say I'm the first cartoonist who went from Piety to Pornography in one lifetime. That was the most fun because it was mine all the way.

That's what it's all about. It's a lot of fun. You can work at home, watch the kids grow up, play sandlot ball with the kids, go clamming, boating.

Q: Any closing comments?

A: Since it's Sunday, we'll take up a collection, say Amen, and quietly walk out of the church.

Thank you very much Mr. Flessel.



Above:
Adventure Comics #46 (Jan 1940) ©DC

Right:
More Fun Comics #30 (Mar/Apr 1938) ©DC

Left:
Greig & Marie Flessel in their new home, circa 1943. They were married in 1937.

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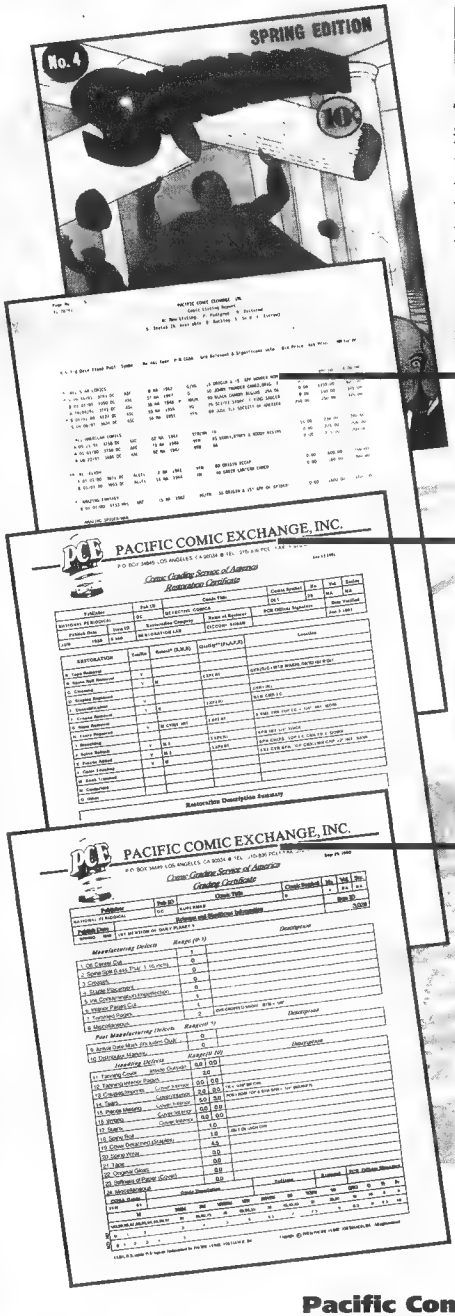

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Flessel on **Flessel**

a candid historical narative
by the dean of
early DC art

When we hit bottom in the 30's, and things got so rotten that bankers sold apples on 42nd Street —whata we gonna do? Simple. Make great movies, write epic novels, bring back vaudeville or, if you're hungry enough, publish comic books. What is a comic book? How and who? Well... it was simple. Just dangle an elusive five spot on a T-Square and illustrators, cartoonists, and writers will come with portfolios to your door.

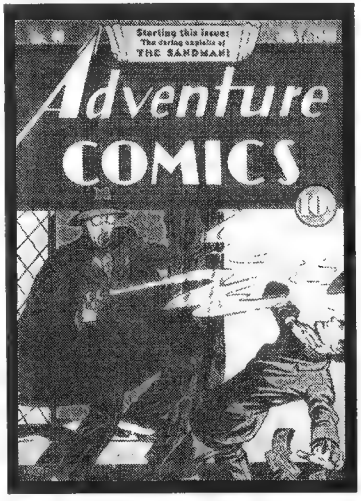
And the logo on that door read "Nicholson Pub. Co.". Go in and climb over stacks of last month's unsold returned comic books. Don't bother the gangling guy at the new drawing table. That's me. Drawing covers for *More Fun Comics, Adventure Comics, Detective Comics.* It's 1937.

The man in the beaver hat, wearing a trench coat and carrying a cane, is Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson. Watch him dodge the process server and escape down the freight elevator.

"Fless", the editor, Whitney Ellsworth, is speaking. "We need 8 pages to fill the next issue of *New Comics."* So "Steve Conrad" was born. Drawn and later quartered. Some good, some rotten. All done in a hurry, with a "smoking pen".

Of my first *Detective Comics* cover, Jules Feiffer wrote: "The first issue of *Detective Comics,* aside from its ground-breaking role, is memorable for the debut of Creig Flessel, not then a good illustrator, but within the first half-dozen issues became one of the best in the business."

©DC



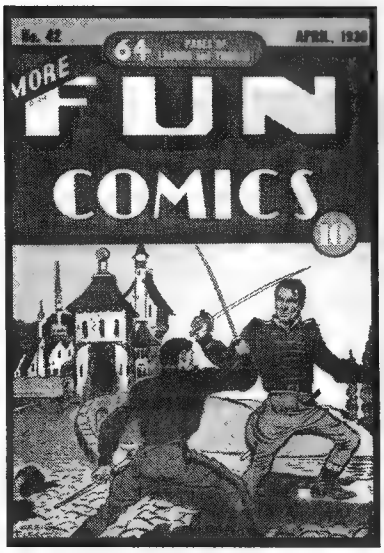
Well, you gotta start somewhere. So I put my dreams of illustrating for the *Saturday Evening Post* on the back burner whilst I cooked up such turkeys as "Hanko

Adventure Comics #40 The first of only six Flessel Sandman cover.

The Mile High copy of Detective Comics #15 (May 1938) with famous jewel theif cover. Considered by many collectors as one of Flessels best. Note two uniformed policemen reflected in mirror.

More Fun Comics #42 (Apr 1939)

©DC



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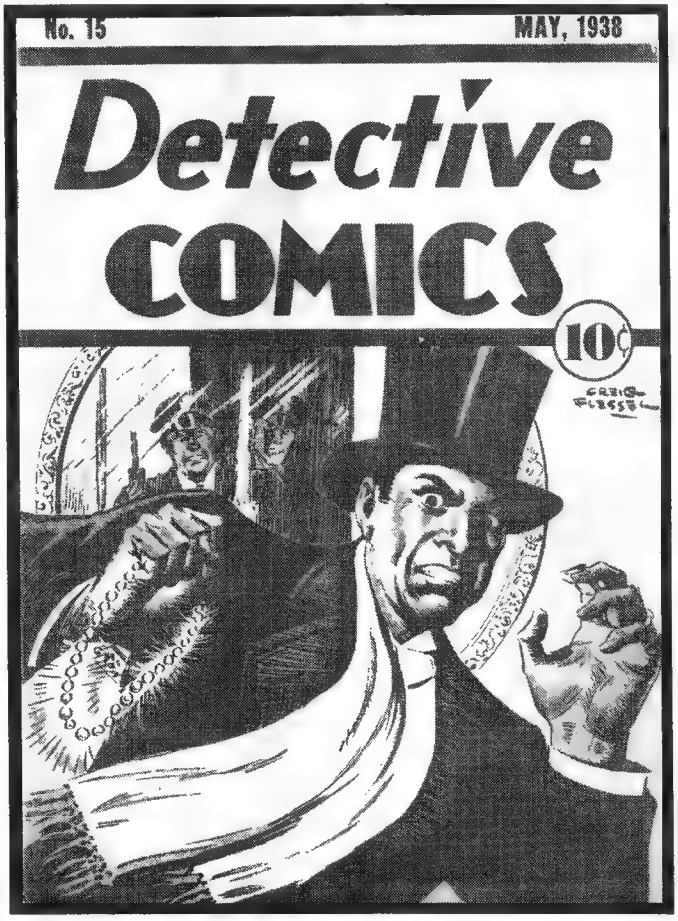


All cover ©DC

Above:
Adventure Comics #47 (Feb 1940)

Right:
Adventure Comics #51 (Jun 1940)

Lower right:
More Fun Comics #44 (Jun 1949)

Below:
Creig Flessel at a Veteran's Hospital in the early days, sketching a G.I. for the National; Cartoonist Society.

the Cowhand", "Speed Saunders", "The Bradley Boys", and "Pep Morgan".

At the time I didn't know the gun (my trusty #3 Windsor-Newton brush) was loaded, and the shots fired would be known as 'The Golden Age of Comics'.

Having predicted an early demise for comic books, I went uptown to Johnstone & Cushing comic art studio.

Here the rape, molestation and prostitution of my work continued, but the money was much better. I learned to draw pretty girls and found that in advertising, every character must be white, Protestant and smiling.

My peers at J & C were Austin Briggs, Joe King, Dik Browne, Stan Drake, Lenny Starr, Bud Jones, Katie Osann, Milt Gross, Harry Haenigsen, Paul Fung, Gill Fox and many others. To keep my sanity I occasionally did a comic book cover or feature for the great Joe Simon.

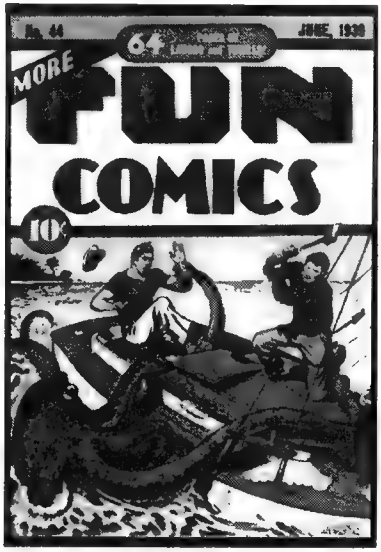
Sanity? How can I say that? A ten-pager, six panels to a page; lay it out, pencil, pencil and ink – you gotta be insane. But then, I guess most comic book artists are some kind of teenage mutant of the media.

I was born in 1912. Am I the oldest comic book artist in captivity? Gad. I'd like to know.

Uneasy rests the Golden Age crown on my balding pate. As a sojourner without portfolio in the wonderful world of comics, I humbly pass my smoking pen to the Fax machines and computer comic print-outs who will be called "softwear inputters" and "hardware reactors" on the flip-side. Hoo-ha.

A note to the critics and "historians": As Baron von Munchhausen used to say: "Vas you dere, Charlie?"

I keep reading in anthologies and collections that "Speed Saunders" was created by Gardner Fox. "Speed Saunders" was created, written, drawn and colored by Creig Flessel at the rate of $5 per page.



The Sandman was created (drawn) by Bert Christman. I met Bert just before he left to fly for General Chenault and his Flying Tigers. He had long blond hair, a leather jacket and a far-away adventure-bound look in his eye. He flew several missions and was shot down, only to be machine-gunned in his parachute.

Did Fox create the concept? I do not know. Did I or Bert create the visual character? I think Bert must have done a story before me. I have no proof.

I knew Fox. A myopic, double-breasted, ex-lawyer from St. John's who was the sweatiest man I ever met. (Even in December.) He eventually wrote the stories, *I think*.

I do know I wrote, drew and colored the Sandman story featured in *The Greatest Golden Age Stories Ever Told*. Hoo, boy—vot a title. Sounds like the Bible. That story originally appeared in *Adventure Comics 51*, 1940.

Far left:
More Fun Comics #46
(Aug 1939)

Left:
New Adventure Comics #26
(May 1938)

both ©DC

You, Robin Snyder, and Ron Goulart are the only editors and historians who have ever bothered to call or write me.

I find most of the anthologies are a compendium of misinformation that could have been corrected by doing a little homework. Get the facts, I say. Best regards, Creig Flessel

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One of DC's best "short titles"

CONGO BILL

Exploring the origins of the first DC back up feature of the 1950s to get their own magzine.

BY DR. GERARD VOLAND

One of my favorite comic book characters has always been Congo Bill- explorer, adventurer, insurance investigator, and jungle "policeman", among other roles that he played during more than twenty years of popularity in DC comics. Bill was featured in some of the finest DC issues of the 1950's during the seven issue run of his own title in 1954-55. These issues of *Congo Bill* are now among the rarest DC comics of the pre-Silver Age.

Congo Bill was sort of an earthbound *Adam Strange* in that both of these DC characters relied upon their minds (rather than some superpower or super scientific arsenal) in order to solve whatever dilemma confronted them. Whereas Adam would apply his scientific knowledge to problem-solving, Bill would use his considerable knowledge of jungle lore. In both cases, readers would benefit by learning something new about the world. [Both characters seemed to live on the fringes of the DC superhero universe; Adam would occasionally interact with the Justice League of America, whereas Congo Bill had a few adventures with the Superman family of characters (for example, in *Action Comics* #280 and in the *Jimmy Olsen* title) during the early '60s, but these interactions were limited in number and always seemed to require the writers to "stretch" their imaginations - and the story premise - in order to involve either Adam or Bill in a superhero world. Of course, some of the Adam Strange/JLA adventures (e.g., *Mystery In Space* #75) were extremely successful in joining Adam's world of Ranagar with the superhero universe; other attempts were not so successful (such as "team-ups" between Adam and Batman in later *Brave And Bold* issues).]

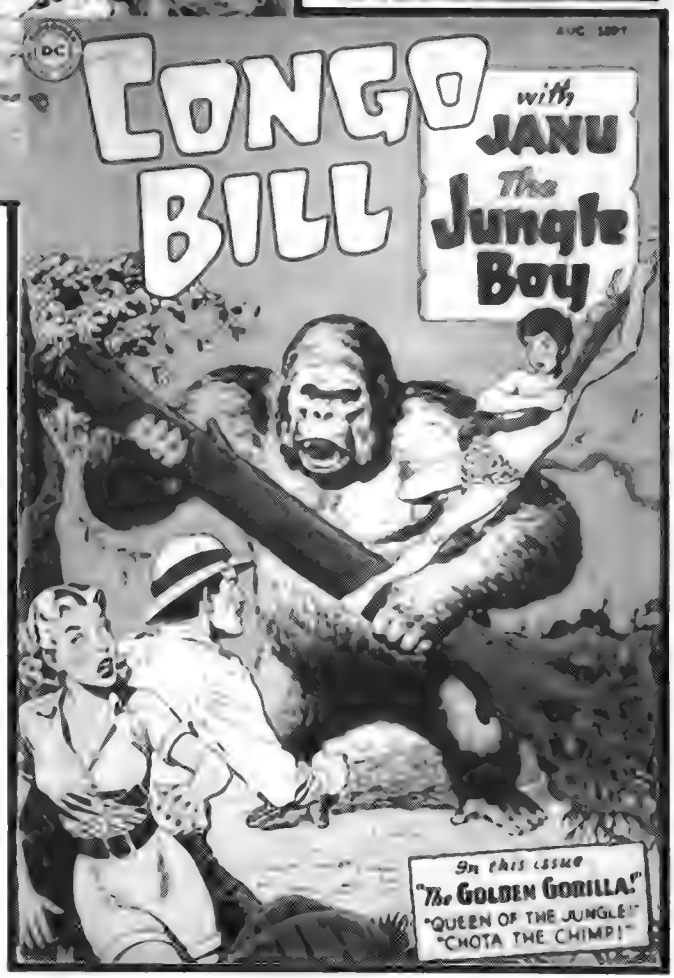
Congo Bill first appeared in *More Fun* #56 (Jun 1940) and continued in this title through #67 (May 1941); the strip was then transferred to *Action Comics*, beginning with #37 (Jun 1941) and continuing through #261 (Feb 1960). [Congo Bill is shown on the classic cover for *Action* #52 (Sep 1942), along with all of the other characters in the title at that time.] The strip was retitled *Congorilla* in *Action* #248 (Jan 1959) when DC apparently decided that *Congo Bill* was becoming stale and needed a change in direction. The *Congorilla* strip was then moved to *Adventure Comics*, beginning with #270 (Mar 1960) and ending with #283 (Apr 1961), with the exception of #282.

As indicated by these dates, Bill enjoyed an extremely long run as a monthly back-up feature in some of DC's major titles; however, he achieved his peak of popularity (or at least "visibility") - and the strip reached its peak in quality - during 1954-55 when he not only appeared each month in *Action Comics*, but also in seven issues of his own title. These seven issues of the jungle adventurer contain some of the finest artwork and most entertaining storylines of the '50s pre-Silver Age era. Each issue sports a dramatic cover and inside art by Nick Cardy, who did some of his very best work on this title. (Cardy later served as the principal artist for the *Aquaman* and *Teen Titans* titles during the 1960s and as cover artist for numerous DC books in the '60s and '70s.) Cardy's work on *Congo Bill* was fluent in body movements, detailed in backgrounds and context, and included a wide variety of viewpoints or perspectives so that one scene might place the reader in an "eavesdropping" position on the branch of an overhanging tree and another would show a stampeding elephant from ground level. The art in these

comics was uniformly excellent and, I would argue, among the very best of the 1950's. (Although the art in the concurrent *Congo Bill* strip in *Action Comics* was also very well done, Cardy was not the artist on this monthly strip.)

In anticipation of the *Congo Bill* title, DC introduced Janu the Jungle Boy in the strip, beginning with *Action* #191, April, 1954. (Such careful preparation for an anticipated change in the use of a DC character is seen again in *Detective Comics #273* (Nov 1959), in which the existence of J'onn J'onzz the Martian Manhunter is revealed to the world. I found this revelation to be puzzling at the time; however, the necessity for such a revelation became apparent three months later, when *Brave And Bold* #28 (Feb-Mar 1960) Introduced the Justice League - with a membership that included the now world-renowned Martian Manhunter.) Jungle boys had been popular in motion pictures and adventure stories for years, (DC would later publish *Bomba The Jungle Boy* and *Korak, Son Of Tarzan.*) and Congo Bill needed some character with whom to interact; and "thought balloons", through which readers are informed of a character's intentions and responses to situations, can become very boring if overused. Janu served as Bill's "sounding board" and resident kid buddy (like Robin, Bucky, and so many others before him), humanizing Congo Bill as a father figure and instilling a sense of stability in the strip never before achieved. With Janu came a small set of supporting animal characters: Chota the Chimp (not unlike Tarzan's Cheeta) and Bombo the Elephant. In earlier adventures,

CONGO BILL
with JANU The Jungle Boy
I TOLD YOU WE COULDN'T SURVIVE IN THE JUNGLE WITHOUT WEAPONS, CONGO BILL!
featuring "The UNARMED SAFARI!"

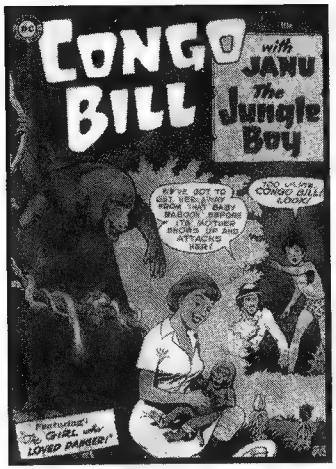


ABOVE LEFT– **CONGO BILL #7 (AUG/SEPT 1955) SCARCE LAST ISSUE.**

ABOVE RIGHT – **CONGO BILL #5 (APR/MAY 1955) ONE OF NICK CARDY'S BEST COVERS.**

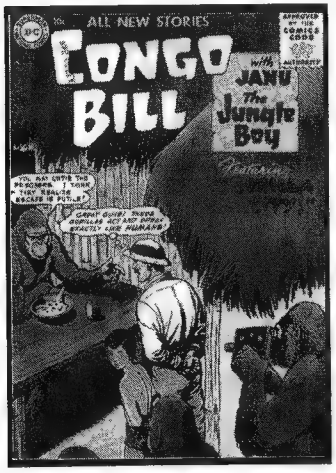
LEFT - **CONGO BILL #1 (AUG/SEP 1954) THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF A "GOLDEN GORILLA"**

ALL COVERS ©DC


CONGO BILL
with JANU The Jungle Boy
SO—WE'VE GOT TO GET HER AWAY FROM THAT BABY BABOON BEFORE THE MOTHER BRINGS UP AND ATTACKS HER!
SO—HE'S THE CONGO BILL, LOOK!
Featuring! The GIRL who LOVED DANGER!

Bill would be found in exotic locales, interacting with characters that had never been seen before in the strip and that would never be seen again. Janu and his animal pals provided a stable cast of characters for the strip and a source for storylines.

Of course, the disadvantage of this stable cast of characters is that the strip then became much more constrained than in earlier days in which Bill was almost totally free to tackle any exciting assignment in any location of the globe. But in order to support a title (as opposed to simply a back-up feature), a cast of supporting characters with whom the title character can interact is a necessity. This cast was well used as springboards for storylines in *Congo Bill*, and breathed new life and a sense of continuity into the strip.


ALL NEW STORIES
CONGO BILL
with JANU The Jungle Boy
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
OH, NO! LOOK THE PROGRAM SAYS THEY REALLY ESCAPED IN PICTURES!
GREAT GUNS! THOSE GORILLAS ACT AND LOOK EXACTLY LIKE HUMANS!

Congo Bill was published during those days of the pre-Silver Age in which DC was trying (rather desperately) to find some successful concepts for new titles. In these pre-*Showcase* days, someone at DC apparently recognized that Congo Bill was a character of long standing in *Action Comics*, and that it might be wiser to base a new title around an existing strip such as *Congo Bill* rather than upon a totally new and untried concept. (*Congo Bill* #1, Aug-Sep 1954, predated - by one month - the next instance in which an established character would be given his own title: *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #1, Sep-Oct 1954, As a result, Bill finally received his own title in 1954, after 14 years as a monthly back-up feature.

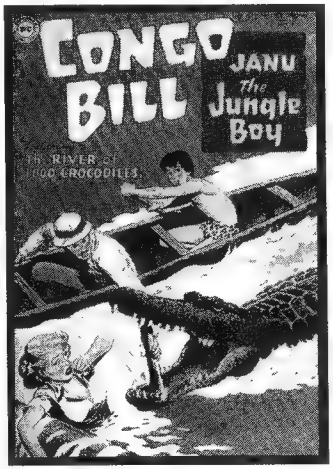
Unfortunately, Congo Bill did not fare well in his own title. It may have been the times (after all, many publishing houses were folding or at least "imploding" during the mid-1950's) or perhaps the concept for the strip was simply not intriguing enough to persuade readers that *Congo Bill* was a wise investment of their ten cents. Whatever the reason, *Congo Bill* ceased publication with issue #7. Fortunately, the strip at least continued in *Action Comics* as a back-up feature (DC reduced the number of pages in their comics at the end of 1954, with the consequence that some strips were discontinued in the "anthology" titles such as *Action Comics*. The *Vigilante* strip was selected for discontinuance in *Action*, beginning with issue #199. *Congo Bill* may have been saved from discontinuance because of the exposure that he was receiving in his own title at that time.)

As noted earlier, all seven issues of *Congo Bill* are quite scarce today. The title was not a commercial success, it did not feature a "high profile" superhero that would attract fans who would methodically save each issue, and it was published during the peak period in which comics were being criticized (in some cases, with justification) as inappropriate reading material for children. As a result, relatively few copies were purchased, and many of these peoples were then either lost or destroyed. Today, *Congo Bill* is a true collectible.

To some of us, the seven issues of *Congo Bill* represent a high point of comics during the 1950's: superb artwork - including some of the best covers ever produced - coupled with clever and well-written storylines, and focused upon the adventures of a "thinking man's" hero and his friends. We would have to wait until 1959 before such a combination of artwork, stories and character would again appear in *Adam Strange*.

CONGO BILL Checklist

Most of the story titles are self-explanatory and require little comment. All issues are quite SCARCE (particularly in high grade: Fine or above) Stories are listed in their order of appearance.



No. 1, (Aug-Sep 1954)

"Chota the Chimp" Introduces Janu's pet chimp Chota

"The Queen of the Jungle"

"The Golden Gorilla" - Cover featured story and the first (pre-Congorilla) appearance of a Golden Gorilla

No. 1 featured a stunning cover (probably the best of the run). It also established a pattern for many of the succeeding issues in that it contained three distinct types of stories: a story that featured one or more of the "supporting cast" of characters (Janu, Chota the Chimp and Bombo the Elephant), a second story that focused on either a newcomer to the jungle (the "fish out of water" kind of story that included a moral lesson for the newcomer) or a criminal that would need to be captured by Congo

CONGO BILL
with JANU The Jungle Boy
Featuring "HUNTER of JUNGLE SOUNDS!"
HUH? WHAT ABOUT SOUND IT MAKE WHEN IT HIT CONGO BILL?
WAIT! DON'T SHOOT, MR. CONGO BILL! I MUST RECORD THE SOUND THAT RHINO MAKES AS IT ATTACKS YOU!

Bill, and a third story that would focus primarily upon 'jungle adventure' (often involving a dangerous animal or perhaps some combination of criminals, newcomers, wild animals and/or a mysterious locale).

No. 2, (Oct-Nov 1954)
"Elephants' Graveyard"
"The Great Jungle Race"
"The River of 1,000 Crocodiles" - Cover featured story

No. 2 may be the rarest issue of the run; it seems to be seldom offered for sale in any condition (See, for example, Gary Carter's comments in the CBM Forum on "Undervalued DC" in *Comic Book Marketplace* #4.)

Such rarity would be consistent with most second issues: for some reason (overcautious behavior?), during the 1950's/early 1960's DC seemed to distribute fewer second issues of a new comic than first and third issues. It may be that they wanted to ensure that the buying public was aware of a new title such as *Congo Bill* by "oversupplying" first issues to retailers, but then cut back on their publishing run for the second issue until the initial sales figures could be tabulated. Whatever the reason, second issues of a DC title from this publishing period are often very difficult to find.

The Cardy cover for this issue is striking with its blue (river) background, thoughtful layout and sense of motion.

No. 3, Dec. 1954 - Jan. 1955
"The Man Who Hunted Congo Bill"
"Chota, Television Star"
"The Girl Who Loved Danger" - Cover featured story

No. 4, Feb.-Mar., 1955
"The Spotted Leopard Strikes Again"
"Safari in the Sky"
"The Hunter of Jungle Sounds" - Cover featured story

No. 5, Apr.-May, 1955
"The Return of Prince Padhan"
"Bombo, Rogue Elephant" - Cover featured story
"The Mysterious Jungle"
A particularly stunning Cardy cover graces this issue.

No. 6, June-July, 1955
"Bombo — The Rage of London"
"The Jungle Trolley Car"
"Gorilla City- Cover featured story
"Gorilla City" is a personal favorite of mine. One of the very few instances in which *Congo Bill* became involved in science fiction, it is a mature (very thoughtful and realistic) story in which Bill and Janu meet a group of intelligent gorillas. The other stories are also entertaining, making this issue perhaps the best of the run. It is also one of the most difficult issues to find.

No. 7, Aug.-Sept., 1955
"The Underwater Big Game Hunter"
"The Boy Who Played Janu"
"The Unarmed Safari" - Cover featured story.
With the exception of #2, #7 seems to be the scarcest issue of the run. As the last issue published by DC, it probably had limited distribution and perhaps a smaller print run than earlier issues.

THIS PAGE– **CONGO BILL #4**

FACING PAGE –
UPPER LEFT– **CONGO BILL #3**

MID RIGHT– **CONGO BILL #2 (RARE)**

LOWER LEFT– **CONGO BILL #6**

ALL COVERS ©DC

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TALES TO ASTONISH
UNCANNY TALES
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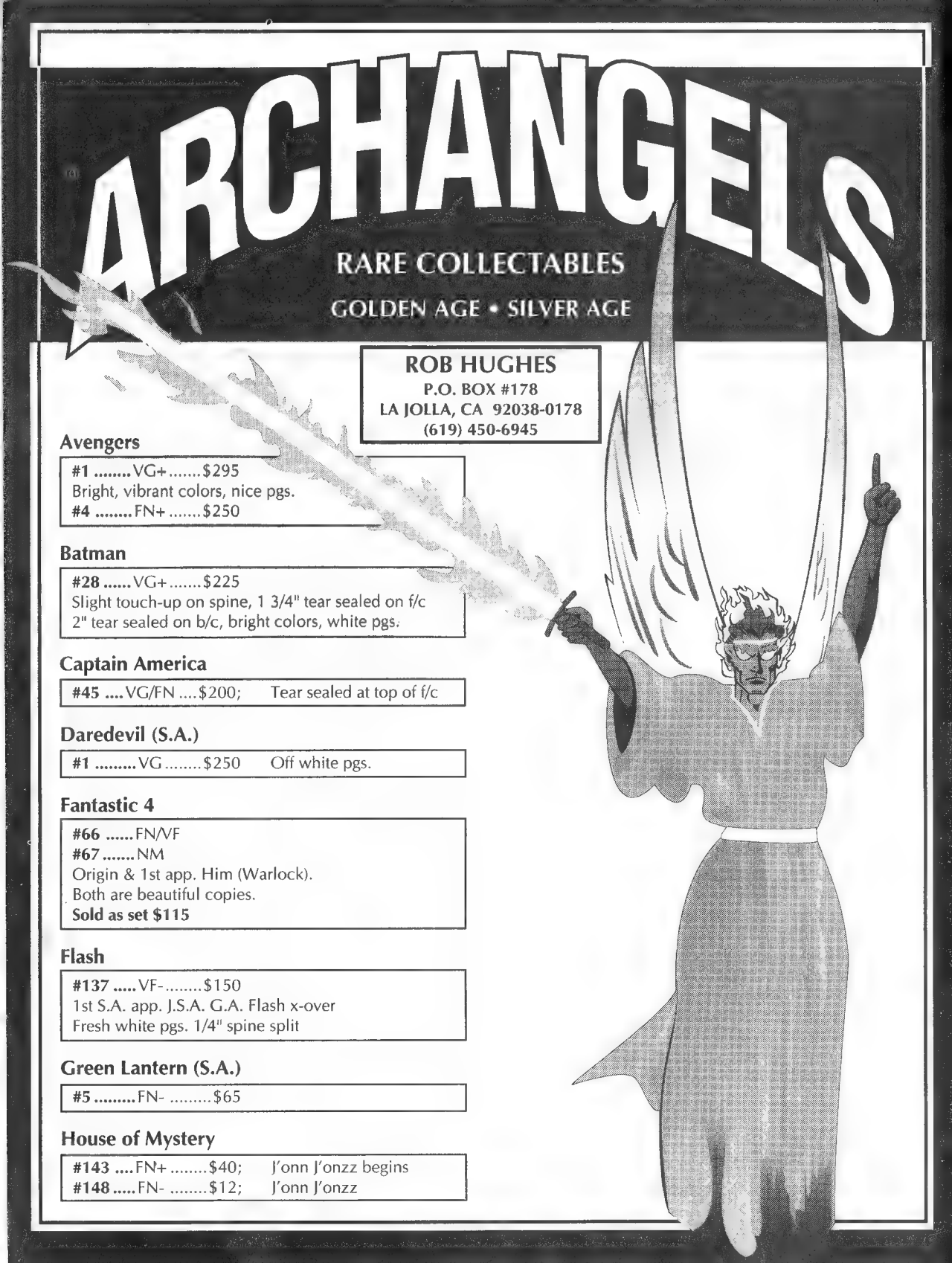

Avengers

#1 .....VG+.....$295
Bright, vibrant colors, nice pgs.
#4 .....FN+.....$250

Batman

#28 .....VG+.....$225
Slight touch-up on spine, 1 3/4" tear sealed on f/c
2" tear sealed on b/c, bright colors, white pgs.

Captain America

#45 ....VG/FN ....$200; Tear sealed at top of f/c

Daredevil (S.A.)

#1 .....VG .....$250 Off white pgs.

Fantastic 4

#66 .....FN/VF
#67 .....NM
Origin & 1st app. Him (Warlock).
Both are beautiful copies.
Sold as set $115

Flash

#137 .....VF-.....$150
1st S.A. app. J.S.A. G.A. Flash x-over
Fresh white pgs. 1/4" spine split

Green Lantern (S.A.)

#5 .....FN- $65

House of Mystery

#143 ....FN+ .....$40; J'onn J'onzz begins
#148 .....FN- .....$12; J'onn J'onzz

House of Secrets

#92 ....VG/FN $80
1st app. Swamp Thing. White pgs.

Ironman & Sub-Mariner

#1 .....VF/NM.....$120 Beautiful copy.

Justice League

#1 .....VG.....$400
Small tear sealed at base of spine,
slight c/t at top staple.

Lois Lane

#70.....FN/VF $100
1st S.A. Cat-Woman. White pgs.

Marvel Feature

#1.....NM .....$45; 1st app. The Defenders

Sgt. Fury & Howling Commandos

#4.....FN- $24
#7 .....FN $24
#8 .....FN $24
Nice pgs. in all books

The Shadow (1973)

#1.....NM .....$20; Warehouse copy.

Showcase

#36 .....VG.....$42; 3rd S.A. app. The Atom

#83 .....VG.....; Nightmaster, Kubert cvr.
#84 .....VG.....; Nightmaster, Kubert cvr.
Sold as set $15

#88.....VF.....; Jason's Quest
#89 ....VF/NM.....; Jason's Quest
Sold as set $12

The Spectre

#1 .....VG/FN $20
#3 .....FN .....$12; Adams art
#4 .....FN .....$12; Adams
#5 .....FN .....$12; Adams
#6.....FN/VF $7
#7.....FN/VF .....$7; Hourman app.

Strange Tales

#101 ....VG+/FN- $125
Human Torch begins. Off-white pgs.
Tear sealed on b/c.

Sub-Mariner

#1.....FN/VF .....$65; Tight, clean, & flat

Sun Girl

#1 .....FN/FN+ $250
Off white pgs., beautiful copy.

Superboy

#100...FN/VF $65
Great looking copy. Nice pgs. Tight, clean, flat & glossy; 1/2" spine split, 1 1/2" lt. corner crease on f/c

Superman & Flash

Superman
#199 ....VF+ .....; 1st Superman/Flash race.
Flash
#175.....VF .....; 2nd Superman/Flash race.
Sold as set $100

Swamp Thing

#1.....NM/MT $45
#7.....NM/MT .....$15; Batman app.
Both are warehouse copies.
Un-opened, un-read. Full gloss.

Tales of Suspense

#52.....FN/VF $50
1st app. Black Widow. Small color flakes on spine.
#80 .....VF+ $22
Great Red Skull/Cosmic Cub cvr.

Tomb of Dracula

#1.....NM .....$30; 1st app. Dracula

S.A. = Silver Age, G.A. = Golden Age,
pgs. = pages, cvr. = cover, lt. = light, x-over = cross over, app. = appearence, c/t = color touch,
f/c = front cover, b/c = back cover

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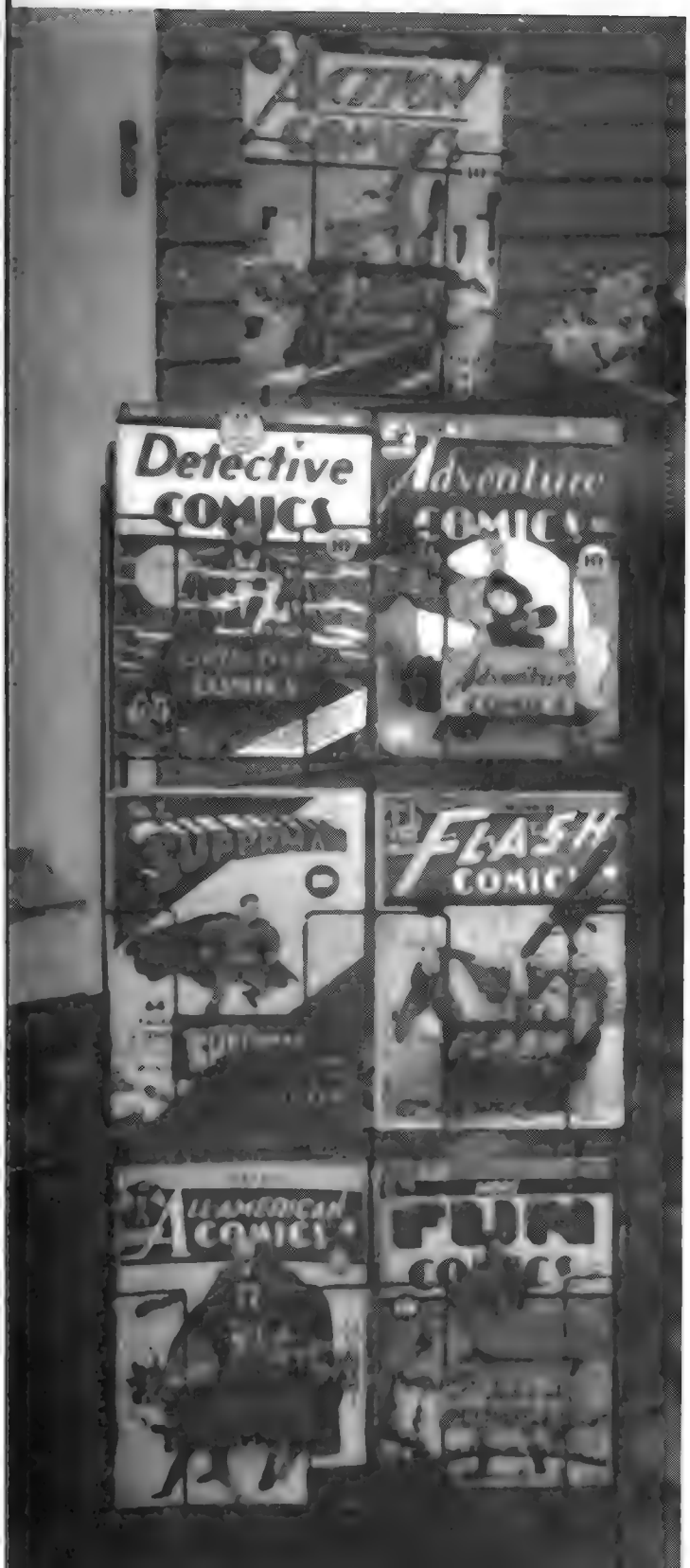
References: Tom French and Mark Wilson.



The Rack!

The Action #1 of comic book stands...

by Don Phelps

The comic book stand shown on this page is an incredibly rare piece of comic book history and is likely all of the following:

– The very first superhero comic book stand.
– The very stand from which you would have purchased Superman #1 in 1939.
– The first "mom & pop" store stand.
– The pinnacle of my 20 year plus collecting obsession.

Lets start with the last statement first. During my years in fandom I have had the distinct privilege (and pleasure) of finding/collecting some very interesting and historically important memorabilia: Barks paintings, *Action* #1, *Marvel Mystery* #1, *Detective* #27, the rare Superman items (including the Sirocco statue, wood jointed doll, Krypto Ray Gun, etc.), Disney art and comics, and on and on and on. None hold the unique fascination for me as "THE RACK!".

All comic book buffs are fascinated with the Golden Age of comics. The innocence, the simplicity, the vibrant colors, and of course, the costumed superhero. Just like today, superhero comic books were an important part of the blooming fascination of the young during the first half of this century. We sometimes forget that their fascination with the four color comic "magazines", which proliferated at an astonishing rate during the late '30s, was just as intense then as it is today.

In the summer of 1939 the industry was ready to explode. DC had the big winner with Superman and the first issue of his own title had just hit the stands. *Detective Comics* had introduced a character called "The Batman" and *Adventure Comics* had just unveiled "The Sandman". DC was poised and ready to unveil a new monthly title, *Flash Comics* featuring Hawkman and the titles namesake, Flash, "the fastest man alive".

Right around this time, this comic stand must have been conceived. A description of it helps to ascertain this— The stand is made of black wrought iron with a

folding metal "easel" back. There are seven compartments, each with individual metal plaques. Each plaque features the individual logos of the "big" DC titles. the seven are: *Action Comics, Superman Comics, Detective Comics, Adventure Comics, Flash Comics, All American Comics* and *More Fun Comics*.

Here's where the detective work begins. The *Flash Comics* and *More Fun Comics* logos shown on the stand were no longer used after the March 1940 issues. (*More Fun* #53 being the last to use the logo on the stand). Knowing that *Flash Comics* began with a January, 1940 cover date, helps the puzzle fall into place. We know, for example, that copies of *Flash* #1 were received as early as late October, 1939. So the comics stand would have to have been conceived, manufactured, and ready to go well before this. It's generally acknowledged that this stand was conceived to help promote DC's newest title, *Flash Comics* #1.

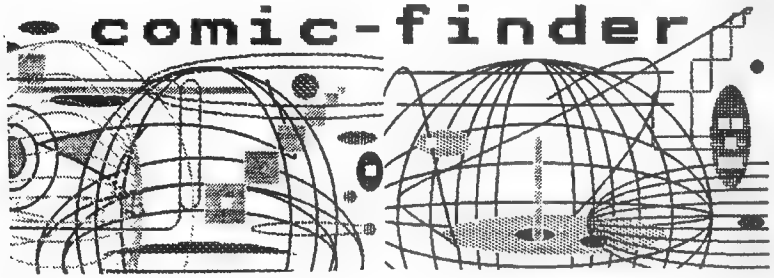
Also, *Superman* #2 was not issued until late November, 1939. So the chances of *Superman* #1 having rested its hallowed pages within the stand's Superman compartment is almost a certainty.

The first DC comic book stand? Most likely. The first DC superhero stand? Not a doubt!

So there it is. What a thrill it is to behold the actual stand from 53 years ago... that held the original comics that have thrilled comic book collectors since the beginning of fandom.

One final note: in the middle of the bottom of the stand there is a small metal plaque which reads: "This display rack is to be used only for magazines indicated above". Hmmm... Seems like I'm almost "bound by a higher authority" to make sure that, as long as I am the custodian, nary a stray Timely, Fawcett, or Centaur comic book should find its way onto "THE RACK!". So be it—I take the oath!

Editor's note: Don Phelps is a 46 year old collector/dealer who lists his occupation as "doing odd jobs around the house". He has a B.A. in English from the University of Massachusetts and has been happily married to his wife, April, for over seven years. Don and April have two children, Megan and Nicholas, whom he adores more than his comic book stand, believe it or not. My brother and I purchased our first copy of *Detective* #1 from Don in 1972, for the outrageous price of $80! No Don, you can't have it back...



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Dirt Cheap Marvel First Issues

BY TONY STARKS

Comic book collectors have always placed a great deal of importance on #1 and first appearance issues. These issues often appreciate considerably when a series or character becomes popular. Just a few years ago, Ghost Rider #1 listed for six dollars, and Astonishing Tales #25 (the first Deathlok), was only three dollars. Now these books are $60 and $90, increases of 1,000% and 3,340% respectively!

In this installment of "Lost Comics of the '70s", let us look at some "dirt cheap" Marvel first issues. The quality of the following books varies considerably, some quite good, some fair, and others, oh well... but all are DIRT CHEAP, that is less than $12 (many less than $5), and any could be the next "HOT" book. In this listing, I have not included reprints, annuals, giant size issues or religious comics. Neither have I listed most oversize (magazine/treasury) or black and white comics. TV and funny animal comics were listed if they featured well known characters and/or had decent runs.

Note: ✓ = recommended issues
✚ = highly recommended issues

Adventures on the Planet of the Apes #1 (10/75) $2.80
✚ Amazing Adventures #1 (8/70) $6
Amazing Adventures #11 (3/72) $7 New Beast
Amazing Adventures #18 (5/73) $7 1st Killraven/N. Adams art
Arrgh! #1 (12/74) $2
Battlestar Galactica #1 (3/79) $1.50
Black Goliath #1 (2/76) $5
✓ Black Panther #1 (1/77) $6 Kirby art
Captain Britain #1 (10/76) $5 British Comic
✓ The Cat #1 (11/72) $10 Wood art
Chamber of Chills #1 (11/72) $2
✚ Champions #1 (10/75) $11
Combat Kelly #1 (6/72) $2.50
Crypt of Shadows #1 (1/73) $2
Devil Dinosaur #1 (4/78) $1 Kirby art
✓ Doc Savage #1 (10/72) $7
Dynomutt #1 (11/77) $1. (Hanna-Barbera)
✓ Eternals #1 (10/75) $3.00
✓ Fear #10 (10/72) $8 Manthing series begins
Flintstones #1 (10/77) $1.50 (Hanna-Barbera)
✓ Frankenstein #1 (1/73) $10 Ploog art
Funtastic World of Hanna-Barbera #1 (12/77) $3 (Hanna-Barbera)
Godzilla #1 (8/77) $5
Gunhawks #1 (10/72) $3
Harvey #1 (10/70) $5
✓ Howard the Duck #1 (1/76) $10
✓ Howard the Duck #12 (3/77) $4 1st app. Kiss
✓ Howard the Duck #13 (4/77) $5 1st full story, Kiss
Human Fly #1 (9/77) $5
✚ Incredible Hulk #141 (7/71) $6 1st Doc Sampson
✓ Inhumans #1 (10/75) $3
✚ Invaders #1 (8/75) $8
John Carter, Warlord of Mars #1 (6/77) $1.50
Journey Into Mystery #1 (10/72) $5
✓ Jungle Action #5 (2/73) $5 Black Panther begins
✚ Kazar #1 (8/70) $10
✓ Kazar #1 (1/74) $2.50
✚ Kull the Conqueror #1 (6/71) $7
Li'l Kids #1 (8/70) $6
Li'l Pals #1 (9/72) $2
Logan's Run #1 (1/77) $3
✓ Machine Man #1 (4/78) $3 Kirby art
ManThing #3 (3/74) $6 1st Foolkiller
Marvel Chillers #1 (10/75) $3
Marvel Classics Comics Featuring...#1 (1976) $3.50
✓ Marvel Feature #4 (3/72) $9 Re-intro Antman
✓ Marvel Feature #1 (11/75) $3.50 Red Sonja begins
✓ Marvel Premiere #26, #27, #29-50 (12/75-10/79) all $1.50 @ except 26 and 27 at $5 @. Tryout book for new characters, various inexpensive 1st appearances.
✓ Marvel Presents #1 (10/75) $5
✓ Marvel Spotlight #12 (10/73) $5 1st Son of Satan
✚ Marvel Spotlight #28, 29 (6-8/76) $8 @ 1st solo Moonknight
✚ Marvel Spotlight #32 (2/77) $6 1st Spider-Woman

Micronauts #1 (1/79) $2.20
✓ Micronauts #8 (8/79) $1 1st Captain Universe
✓ Ms. Marvel #1 (1/77) $3
Night Nurse #1 (11/72) $1.50
✚ Nova #1 (9/76) $5
✓ Omega the Unknown #1 (3/76) $3
✓ Omega the Unknown #8 (9//77) $6 1st app. of 2nd Foolkiller
✓ Omega the Unknown #9 (10/77) $8 1st full app. of Foolkiller
Outlaw Kid #1 (8/70) $4
✓ Power Man #48-50 . (10-12/78) $3@ team-ups w/ Iron Fist begin
✓ Red Sonja #1 (1/77) $3
✓ Red Wolf #1 (5/72) $1.50
Rom #1 (12/79) $2.50
Shanna, the She Devil #1 (12/72) $2
Shogun Warriors #1 (2/79) $2.50
Skull, the Slayer #1 (8/75) $1.50
✓ Son of Satan #1 (12/75) $3
✓ Spider-Woman #1 (4/78) $4
✓ Spidey Super Stories #1 (10/74) $2
Spoof #1 (10/70) $2
Spotlight #1 (9/78) $1 (Hanna-Barbera characters)
Strange Tales #169 (9/73 $2.50 Brother Voodoo!
Super Natural Thrillers #1 (12/72) $1.20
✓ Super Villain Team-Up #1 (8/75) $4
Tarzan #1 (6/77) $1.50
TV Stars #1 (8/78) $3.50 (check out the art in issue #3!)
2001, A Space Odyssey #1 (12/76) $2 Kirby art
✓ 2001, A Space Odyssey #8 (7/77) $1 1st Machine Man
Western Gunfighters #1 (8/70 $4
Western Team-Up #1 (11/73) $1
Yogi Bear #1 (11/77) $1.20 (Hanna-Barbera)

I've no doubt left out some additional deserving comics. This list contains over 80 Marvel first issues. One copy of each in NM condition lists for less than $400. That's an average of approximately $5 each. It would be interesting to compare the appreciation of these books against a Silver Age key of comparable price (say *Daredevil* #1 or *Avengers* #4) over the next 3-5 years. Maybe we'll do that in a future issue of CBM. One final note. With the recent increased interest in Dell (mostly late '50s) and Gold Key (mostly '60s) Hanna-Barbera Comics, it doesn't require much thinking to see that eventually HB collectors are going to get around to "discovering" Charlton and Marvel HB comics. And, at these inexpensive prices, why not try to find a few? It's a rather tiny gamble on the future and actually the books are rather entertaining. Till next time, viva the '70s!

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Rob & Tim's Excellent Market Report

by Rob Hughes & Tim Riley

Well, here we are again folks, how's everything in comicsville? I know, I know, some of you out there have written or approached me at cons and said, "Hey Tim, how can I get the Silver and Golden Age comics comics that I want at prices that won't cause permanent psychologocal damage?" My advice is to faithfully purchase this fine publication each and every month. CBM is the best magazine of its kind for the true Gold/Silver fan. Heck, I learn something new every issue. So now first star on the right and on to comic book marketland.

"THE DEMAND FOR ATLAS/MARVEL PRE-HERO TITLES IS UNBELIEVABLE!"

POST SILVER AGE

'70s Marvels: In my opinion Marvel still commands the 70's troops. Right now high grade keys are really selling well. Prices on just about every key issue has increased by leaps and bounds. The only books I can think of that have slipped are *Spidey* #129 and *The Hulk* #181. The hype on these books has finally worn thin. Still, they're keys so I expect there will always be a demand for them, however small. *Astonishing Tales* #25 and *Iron Man* #55 are still asked for, but demand for these two keys has quieted down. The real winner on the comeback trail is *X-Men* #94. I can't keep them in stock as long as the grade is high. *X-Men Giant Size* #1 is not far behind. Expect to lay down about $200 each N/M-M in the near future. Barry Smith *Conans* are also making a strong come back, #1 being the one to get and approaching $200 at this writing. And why not, this was a brilliant series with brilliant art by Mr. Barry Windsor Smith and don't forget the great stories by the master, Roy Thomas.

70's D.C. Neal Adams early 70's books are the cookin' right now. Demand for his classic Green Lantern/Green Arrow series seems to be at an all time high. If you can pick up a NM set for under $200. you got yourself a deal. His *Batmans* are also rising in price and given the liklihood of continued intensive interest in the Caped Crusader, I whole heartedly recommend investing in Neal's "Bat gems" while the gettin's good. *Swamp Things* are still red hot, *House of Secrets* #92 is the book of choice and if you can find a near mint expect to pay double guide or more (it's still worth it!). Kaluta's *Shadow* and the *Phantom Stranger* are being asked for often and prices are starting to reflect this. Of course, *Lois Lane* #70 with everyone's favorite feline Bat Villain (Catwoman) are in high demand at the usual double NM guide. Kirby's have slowed a bit and only *Kamandi* #1 and *New Gods* #1 are still seem active.

SILVER AGE

Marvel: Marvel Silvers have slowed but high grades will always be sought after. Let's face it, most serious collectors have most the Marvels they need yet high grade copies still don't surface all that often and are not readily found. I can't remember the last time I saw for sale true VF or better copies of *Hulk* #1, *Tales Of Suspense* #39, or just about anything else for that matter! (Can you?) So if you don't have your Marvel keys yet, your gonna need a little luck (and the ability to pay double or triple guide!)

DC Not much has changed since our last outing. *Brave and The Bolds* are super hot right now. I guess D.C. fans have discoverd that mortgaging they're homes in order to complete their *Showcase* collections is a bit tough on the old budget. DC War comics are red hot and so are some other DC genres. I get a lot of requests for *Tomahawk* #1-10. Let me also add that *Danger Trails* are super hot but good luck finding them It seems that there just aren't that many available.

PRE SILVER

In my humble opinion Horror and Sci fi comics from the fifties are quickly becoming the hot new collectable genre. They may not be for every taste and sensibility, but I, for one, love 'em. There are literally hundreds, even thousands out there, and most are soooooo affordable. In this category E.C.s are the generally the cadillacs, but they are followed closely by Avon and Harvey horror titles. If you are so inclined, seek these books out in mid to high grade as prices are headed up, up and away.

The demand for Atlas/Marvel pre-hero titles is unbelievable! I get calls from all over the world for the big four (*Strange Tales, Journey Into Mystery, Tales To Astonish,* and *Tales Of Suspense*). High grade examples are literally impossible find and are usually double to triple guide. Recently at a swap meet I was lucky enough to pick up a few VG/F copies for $2-$3 each. Is it possible that some retailers are still not hep to the demand for these titles? This situation won't last when the army of "comic book locust" begins to scour the countryside for these wonderful "Kirby/Ditko delights". Here's a real opportunity to stay one step ahead of the pack!

GOLDEN AGE

High grade... unrestored... you betcha. Some self proclaimed Golden Age expert (probably Rob) informed me recently that many hypothesize that 75 to 85% of all Golden Age comics have been "touched" (restored) in some way or other. If this is true (which it probably is) Golden Age books that are completely unrestored are going to command sky-high prices. In the near future, expect to pay out the wazoo for true unrestored copies, even for non-keys. Some tips: Black Terror, Hangman appearances, Bulletman, Samson, Black Condor, Miss Fury, Shield all are growing in demand right now and are still quite affordable. Timely and DCs are, of course, still the Rolls Royces

of the Golden Age. But there's only so many out there for the growing numbers who can afford them. So stiff upper lip Golden Agers, keep a weather eye peeled me heartys… there's plenty of bargains still to be had.

Time to go Marketeers, hope I've been at least a little bit helpful. Good luck and good hunting. See ya next time…

– Tim Riley

(Timothy Riley is the buyer for Superior Comics in Santa Monica and an Overstreet Update advisor.)

With the economy still lingering in the dungeon of ill-health, lower to mid-grade books are beginning to pick up steam and become much more attractive to collectors across the country. The dreadful and frustrating words "All I want are NM keys!" is not echoing throughout my halls and across the phone line as frequently as it used to, which is a nice change of pace.

Golden-Age demand has been steady to moderate lately. A few reported sales: *Detective* #35 PR $125; *Detective* #47 VF (res.) $540: *Detective* #129 VF+ (res.) $250; *Marvel Mystery* #10 FN+ (slight res.) $475; *Mary Marvel* #1 VF/NM $450; *More Fun* #61 FN+ (slight res.) $600; *More Fun* #85 VF/NM $650; *Whiz* #53 VF $65; *Whiz* #96 NM $50; *World's Finest* #71 VG/FN $150-This book is smoking and demand for it is soaring.

Silver-Age continues to enjoy high activity. baby boomers just can't seem to get enough of their childhood hero's. Some sales: *Amazing Spider-Man* #50 NM $200; *Atom* #7 GD/VG $15; *Brave & Bold* #34 VG/FN $150-many requests for this 1st Hawkman issue; *Captain America* #100 NM $250, *Captain America* #104 NM $35, *Captain America* #105 VF/NM $25, *Captain America* #108 NM $35, *Captain America* #109 NM $40, *Captain America* #115 NM/MT $20, *Captain America* #118 VF+ $12, *Captain America* #119 NM $15, *Captain America* #120 VF+ $12; *Hulk* #102 VF+ $100; *Lois Lane* #70 VG- $15-very hot; *Showcase* #60 VG+ $25; *Silver Surfer* #3 VF $50, *Silver Surfer* #3 VF+ $55, *Silver Surfer* #9 FN/VF $15, *Silver Surfer* #16 VF/NM $20; *Swamp Thing* #1 VF/NM $22; *Tales Of Suspense* #63 VF $60, *Tales Of Suspense* #65 VF/NM $50, *Tales Of Suspense* #91 NM $30, *Tales to Astonish* #36 VF $175, *Tales to Astonish* #42 VF+ $75. But enough numbers. On to a few…

MARVELS TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON

***Strange Tales* #89:** 1st app. of Fin Fang Foom (10/61), "The most fearful menace of them all!" Who you say?!! The "Foomster!" That ancient, powerful, and gigantic green (orange in the story) dragon who sleeps beneath The Great Wall of China. And believe me, he gets quite perturbed when awakened and does not care much for us little humans. Another Kirby (and perhaps his best) monster great.

This book is really difficult to find, in any grade. A dark blue cover that announces any creases, dings, tears and all other imperfections without mercy. However, it is one of the most beautifully illustrated covers by "king Kirby"; depicting a classic green Foom destroying a house with one hand while reaching out to grab a fleeing mortal with the other.

Guides for $45 in NM. As is the case with all these pre-hero monster books, the first job is to just find a copy in any grade, then buy it. If a medium to high grade (FN or better) comes your way, count your blessings and "do not pass go" without the comic. Demand already far outweighs the supply, and if Ole Foom ever really takes off...watch out!

***Thor* #162, #168-#169**: Behold mortals, GALACTUS! What collector could not be charmed by the 1st origin of the dreaded planet devourer (3/69, 9-10/69). The birth of Mr. Power Cosmic himself; Sole survivor of the past famed and far advanced planet Taa, destroyed by the Creeping Plague.

This is a major character within the Marvel Universe, and a very popular one as well. With his 1st appearance (*Fantastic Four* #48: cameo in last panel) approaching $300 in NM, I believe this trilogy is extremely under priced and overlooked at $28 each in NM. Yes, *Fantastic Four* #48 is skyrocketing lately, mainly because it is The Silver Surfer's 1st appearance, but remember, Galactus made Chrome Dome with but a slight wave of his mighty hand (just imagine what he could do if he really took his time), and it seems like very logical marketplace thinking to assume that this origin should be worth at least a third of his debut.

Nick Fury #15: 1st app. of The deadly Bullseye (11/69). Guides for $20 in NM. Tough to find in high grade and worth every cent. Most likely Daredevil's most hated arch-enemy (Bullseye murdered Dare Devil's 1st love, Elektra) during a bloody battle in the classic Frank Miller saga: *Daredevil* #181). The assassin's origin in *Dare Devil* #131 is likewise valued at $20. Book should presently be closer to $50. Pick one up before it reaches $100.

Tales Of Suspense #50: 1st app. of Iron Man's arch-foe The Mandarin (2/64); "The most feared oriental of all time." This direct and evil descendent of Genghis Khan, with his dreaded ten alien power rings, will stop at nothing until the entire human race is under his heel. His violent lust for power and over-lordship of planet Earth is second only to Dr. Doom's. And, if you can believe it, this "Jupiter-head" egotist even had the audacity to awaken Fin Fang Foom from his century spanning nap.

Guides for $65 in NM. Extra tough to find in high grade because of the dark cover. Great villain, great book. Also look for issue #62 which is the Mandarin's origin ($40 in NM).

Next time we meet it will be time once again for The Great San Diego Comic Convention. Until then, I wish you all the best. Have a safe trip to America's Finest City, and I'll see you in San Diego...

– Rob Hughes

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Wonder Con Blues

Just dropping you a note to let you know that my ad in the most recent issue of CBM was a resounding success. I will certainly be advertising again when I accumulate some more good books to sell. Even with the ad rates increasing, CBM is an excellent advertising bargain.

I just attended the Wonder Con up here in Oakland this past weekend and was sorry to see that CBM was not represented here. The con was a bit of a disappointment, mostly due to the small number of out-of-state dealers in attendance. Most of the dealers there were locals that I see all of the time, and, as a result, I was not able to fill my lengthy want list. Perhaps due to the recession, dealers are having to limit the west coast cons they attend this year, with most of them opting for San Diego. Oh well.

I did run into Bill Howard at the Wonder Con, who bought some stuff out of my CBM ad, and he mentioned that you own the Mile High copies of *Congo Bill*. I did not even know Mile High issues of *Congo Bill* existed! I am a newfound *Congo Bill* enthusiast and have been trying to complete a run of this scarce '50s series as well as some of the key Congo Bill Action Comics. In the past several months I have obtained issues #1, #3, #5, and #6 of *Congo Bill* in about Good condition. I love these books despite their battered condition. If you ever lose your mind and decide to sell your copies of *Congo Bill* I sincerely hope you will keep me in mind.

Bill also mentioned to me that CBM will be undergoing a redesign in upcoming issues. I can't wait to see the improvements and wish you and CBM continued success in the future.

Andy Marinkovich
Palo Alto, California

(Thanks for your kind words and I'm glad your ad did well. I also personally love the Congo Bills along with all the "short esoteric" DC titles of the '50s. Just to show how scarce high grade Congo Bill is, even the Mile High copies were VF at best (in fact many of the Mile High '50s books were in lesser condition than the '40s books). I also noticed that you have discovered CBs #2 and #7 are the tough ones to find. This issue of CBM features an extremely well written and well researched article on Congo which I found very interesting, and I suspect you will too. Now if only there had been an issue of Janu the Jungle Boy, whew...that would have really been esoteric. Editor)

The Rarest Detective Comic?

I recently helped a client complete their collection of *Detective Comics*. I think it would be interesting to share with your readers which issue turned out to be the hardest to locate. It wasn't #1, or #27, or any key issue for that matter. After three years of searching through hundreds of collections, it turned out to be *Dectective Comics* #187. This issue now has my vote as the rarest of the run.

Jay Maybruck
Sparkle City Comics
Sewell, New Jersey

(Thanks for your information Jay. Editor)

The Lost X-Men Story

I'm trying to locate an *X-men* story call "Magneto The Triumphant". My best guess is that it came out around 1975 or 76. Can you help?

Albert Nilofar
Miami, Florida

(I believe, and Marvel experts please double check me on this one, that the issue to which you refer is X-Men #112, Aug 1978. The story title was "Magneto Triumphant!". Editor)

Hovey Square Flashback

Never having seen CBM in a comics store before, I picked up issue number 13 a few days ago and enjoyed it immensely. I'm a big Silver Age collector myself and usually find the breathless excitement over contemporary comics by other zines quite tedious. Not that CBM is stuffy, but I find its level of writing to be more fun and light hearted than the frantic scramble to spot the next multi-million copy seller that various price guides have recently begun to fixate upon. The letters page proved to me to be the most interesting feature, and you have only yourself to blame for inviting readers at its end to write to you describing their comics experiences.

My friend and I were nine years old as we stood in the drizzle of a gray, overcast day in 1964. The only comics I'd ever seen belonged to an older boy in the neighborhood who'd promised to take me and my friend to Hovey Square Variety to get some the next time he went. He came out, met us in the street, asked us if we had our money and set off up the hill. Hovey's had only a tiny assortment of comics, but the older boy had recently converted from DCs to the new Marvels and recommended them to us. My first purchase was *Spider-Man* #14 and I was hooked for life. My father didn't believe in allowances so I was forced to patrol the neighborhood with my wagon, hunting up cast off bottles for cash. Once a week I'd trek up to Hovey's, trade them in, and managed to get one or two Marvels. Soon I had my own small stack of precious comics that I and my friend read and reread until the dread day when school began, and my father ordered me to sell them all at Harvey's Bookland downtown and forbade me to read them during the school year. Thus began my secret life of buying comics, reading them in hiding, and stashing them in places around the house. This pattern was repeated for years so I was never able to amass a sizable collection until I got to high school, when I was allowed to finally keep my comics. When Hovey's closed in 1968, I switched my allegiance to Dana's Fruitland in downtown Lowell where, on early Saturday

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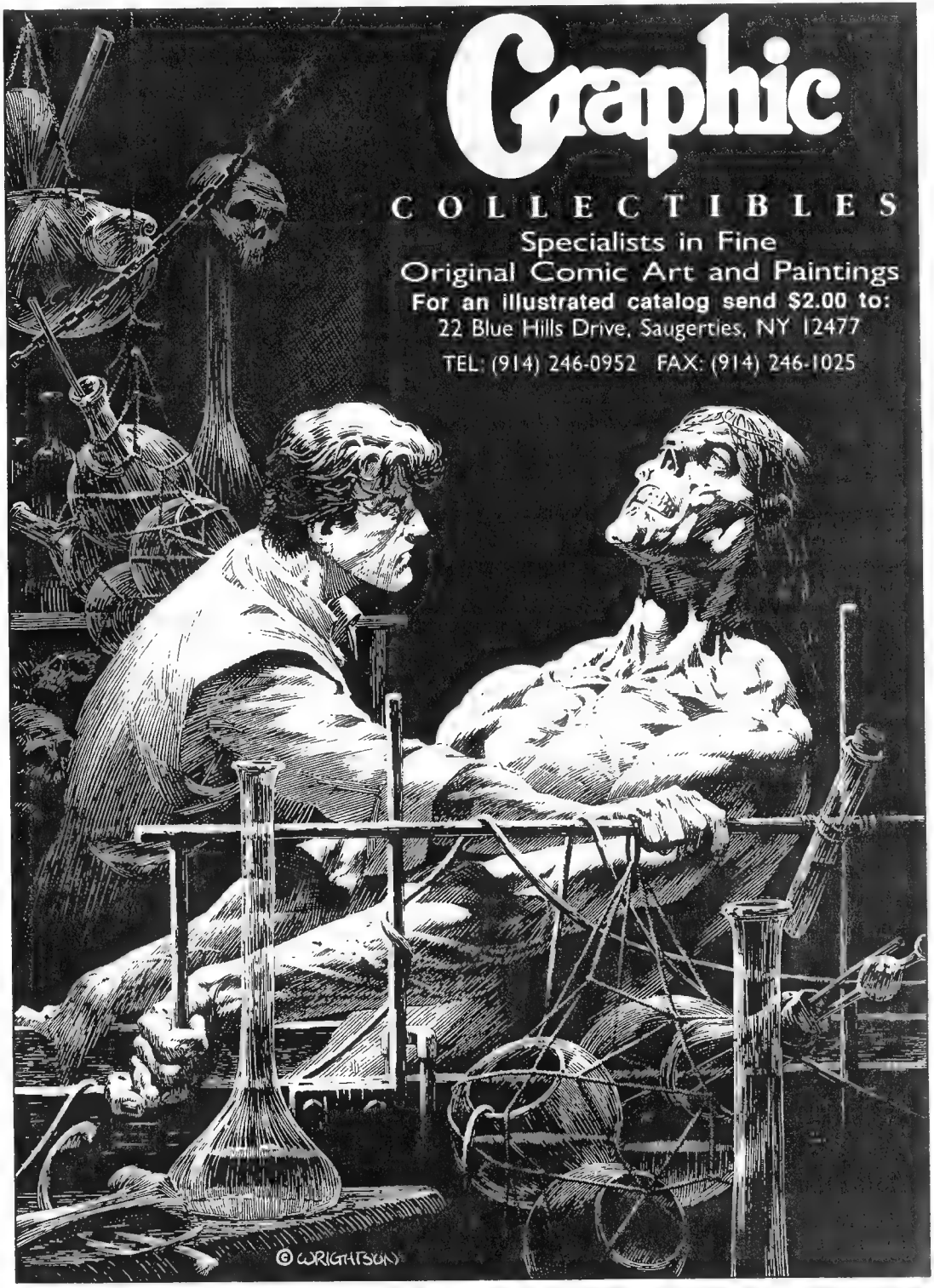
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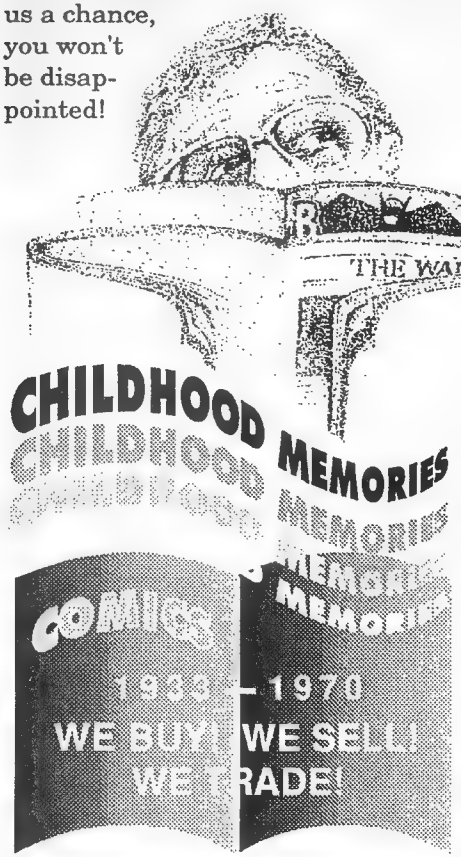

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continued from page 60

mornings, with the few dollars saved from my paper route, I was allowed by the proprietor to snip the wire bundling and sort out the new comics, taking out the ones I wanted. I felt it was quite a privilege. After graduating high school, I took a job downtown that just happened to be located right next door to Harvey's Bookland and on lunch breaks, I'd wander over to check out the used books (by this time, *Conan Comics* had led me to buy and read all the Howard novels, Master of Kung Fu to read all the Fu Manchu novels and Burroughs was a foregone conclusion). Although Harvey's had always dealt in buying and selling used comics, I never really noticed them until after I took that job. Then one day I walked in and noticed a copy of *Spider-Man* #58 hanging on the wall with a price tag of $1 on it. (This was 1974, and as far as I know, just before the real boom in comic collecting when comic shops were still unknown, and I had never even seen a comic inside a plastic sleeve before). Well that cover sent powerful waves of nostalgia coursing through me, but I balked at paying a dollar for a used comic. The price was just too high. I left the store. But over the weekend, I couldn't get that cover out of my mind, it brought back so many pleasant memories. I decided to buy just that one and felt guilty that whole day after paying the price demanded for it. But after reading it, I was hooked more powerfully than ever. I had to get more of them. Soon I was visiting Harvey's on every payday and buying up whole strings of Silver Age comics. My concentration was on Marvels and there were so many books that I remembered and some that I had completely forgotten that I quickly amassed a sizable collection. Guilt once more hit me when, after getting all the cheap stuff, it was time to look at the earliest issues. Harvey wanted ten dollars apiece for good conditioned *Avengers* #1, *X-Men* #1, *Astonish* #35 and twenty dollars for *Spider-Man* #1. I bought them all and felt guilty for about a week afterward, but needless to say, I've never regretted it since. The one regret I do have, is that at the time, I was under the impression that the more wrecked up a book was, the more valuable it must be and many of my earliest books were not in very good condition, and I've spent the years since then upgrading my collection. A couple of years later, I left my job for college, leaving Harvey's and the more innocent era of comics collecting behind. It was soon after that the first comics shops began to open, the prices of back issues began to skyrocket and I made my first trip to a comics convention in nearby Boston. It was at one of those conventions, only a few years ago, that I had the pleasure of meeting Stan Lee and presented my Harvey's bought *Spider-Man* #1 for him to sign. As he was doing so, he accidentally made a tiny tear in the cover and said, whoops! Sorry about that! "That's okay, Stan," I said, "This book's more yours than mine, and I don't have any intention of ever selling it." Then he wrote, "Torn by Stan Lee" on the cover. To me, it was a great climax to a career of comics collecting to meet and personally thank a man who'd given me so many years of reading pleasure.

Now here's a request I'd like to toss at you: How about an article on Lee and Kirby's Marvel westerns? With my mostly complete set of Silver Age Marvels, I've started to look around for something else to branch out into, and started to collect Marvel's westerns, but only those with Kirby art. And are they hard to find! I've checked in comics stores across the country and at every convention in Boston for the last five or six years, and have only been able to find about two thirds of the issues I suspect were done by Lee and Kirby and most of those in poor condition. With the difficulty in finding them in near mint condition, I'd think the prices for them would be greater than they are, but mostly they are under twenty dollars. In addition, I've discovered that many of the ideas Marvel would bring to its new line of super heroes starting with the *Fantastic Four* were already being done with their western heroes before the first issue of that book; particularly in *The Rawhide Kid* and *Two Gun Kid*. With all this, I'd expect more attention being spent on them but there seems to be none. I've always thought there was a good article in the subject if anyone cared to go for it.

Haven't seen the first part of Tony Stark's Lost Comics of the '70s, but if he didn't mention them, I just have to remind him of DC's *Korak, Son of Tarzan* #46 to #56 with the beautiful Mike Kaluta back-up Carson of Venus adaptations. These books still go for mere pennies and seem to be virtually forgotten by fandom at large (who've only recently rediscovered Kaluta's Shadow). And need I mention his Frankenstein back-ups in The Phantom Stranger?

Pierre Comtois
Lowell, Massachusetts

(I found your early comic book collecting saga wonderful. Thanks for sharing it. I also feel that Atlas/Marvel westerns are a great uncharted area that is ripe for an article. While Pat Calhoun and I were researching the Atlas article in the latest Overstreet, we were both struck by how much research there is left to do on all the other Atlas/Marvel genres. So I would like to personally invite you to share your Kirby/Lee/Western research with the rest of fandom. Oh and you are absolutely right, the Koraks you mention are incredible. Editor)

Data is Scarce

I really like your magazine because it seems to be more for adult collectors. I've been collecting *More Fun Comics* for over twenty years, and I really enjoyed Pat Kochanek's data in your last issue. I like to see even more studies like this one so that collectors could get more information on rarity. As we move into the 21st century, I believe that rarity will become the most important factor in determining price. I wonder if you realize how important your magazine has become to the serious collectors out here. Every time I go to a convention, the serious GA and SA collectors are reading and discussing it. Thanks for a truly excellent and RELEVANT mag.

Dean Bolter
New York

(Don't forget FUN! Thanks for your letter Dean. Editor)

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2nd Tier Heroes

I'm writing to renew my subscription and thank you for a wonderful magazine. It's so much nicer to read about Silver and Golden Age classics instead of reading about Marvel's latest marketing gimmick (never improved storytelling).

I still buy the new stuff, but it doesn't give me anywhere the enjoyment of the old. The best new things DC and Marvel put out lately are their hard cover reprints of older material. I'm waiting for DC's current re-introduction of the JSA with mixed feelings. I'm all for their return, but if they are ruined as DC has ruined, the Legion Of Super Heroes, I won't be too surprised. The JSA mini-series was okay but give me another Golden Age reprint any day as DC did in the '70s. Actually DC's supposed to put out an early days of the LSH book as well. We shall see.

I would love to see some articles on the 2nd tier of Golden Age DC heroes (behind the big four). I love Dr. Fate, The Spectre, Hawkman, as well as Starman, Dr. Mid-Nite, and the pulp inspired Sandman before Simon & Kirby revamped him. Also, I have a question that perhaps you could answer. When and where did Tommy Tomorrow first appear? I've seen the Showcase issues but didn't he start much earlier as a back up feature somewhere?

Anyway, thanks again for a great magazine. I have an *Amazing Fantasy* #15 and a *Fantastic Four* #1 that are also among the major prizes in my collection, but they're not in the greatest condition. Thanks again. It's this kind of spirit that brings people into this hobby. That and your magazine which is turning my collecting into an obsession!

Mike Jackson
Los Angeles, California

(Thanks for your letter Mike. Here is the info on Tommy Tomorrow forth with. He first appeared in Real Fact Comics #6, 8, 13, and 16. Then began quite a long series in Action Comics from #125 through #251. After that Tommy moved over to World's Finest for issues #102 through #124 . And then finally the five Showcase issues, #41, #42, #44, #46, and #47. Also we shouldn't overlook his minor contribution to Showcase #100. Long time Tommy Tomorrow collectors are quick to remind others about the four Real Fact appearances which are often overlooked. You have listed "2nd tier" characters that are near and dear to this old collectors heart. If you enjoy the old Sandman, you'll no doubt enjoy the interview with and article by Greig Flessel in this issue. Oh and welcome to the LOC - "Legions Of Obsessed Collectors". Editor)

Unmerciful Lecture

When you and I sat in my basement until past-wee hours of the morning back in 1990 talking about this new "paper" you were planning called Comic Book Marketplace, I can recall lecturing you unmercifully about all the things you should do and should watch out not to do.

Issue #14 just arrived in the mail today and I find the class of this publication incredible. In fact, in retrospect it seems almost embarrassing to think that someone who could do such a slick job today sat so patiently listening to all of that rhetoric such short time ago.

But then—being a long time observer of the quick study intellect of one Mr. Carter—why should I be surprised?

Bruce Hamilton
Another Rainbow/Gladstone
Scotsdale, Arizona

(Since I can personally attest to the fact that Bruce Hamilton is the single busiest human on the planet, the fact that he would work into the wee hours and write is high praise indeed. Thanks Bruce... without your help and encouragement during the early phases of the magazine, CBM wouldn't be here right now! Gary)

Dottie on CBM

Just a note to say that CBM is the only comic book collectors magazine that I can read from cover to cover. See you in San Diego!

Dorothy Harris
Avon Books, New York

(Nice to hear from you Dottie, how are things going at Avon? I'm looking forward to the SD Con too. Editor)

Mint Junkie Backlash

Although there seems to be a rising backlash against "mint junkies", the recent strong demand for Mile High grade comic books will ultimately be good for the hobby as it focuses dealers and collector's attention on the subject of comic book grading.

Both dealers and collectors need to be "condition conscious" and receptive to subtle differences in comic book grading. For the continued growth of comic collecting, grading must accurately reflect actual conditions as closely as possible. The new 100 point grading systems used by the Pacific Comics Exchange and the latest *Overstreet Price Guide* reflects the true diversity of comic book conditions. Two comics graded in very good condition may vary within a large range, and the new systems should allow everyone to accurately differentiate between the two books.

Hopefully, everyone realizes a comic that doesn't have to be in perfect condition to have value. Any comic book can have monetary and/or personal value. However, a high grade book should rightfully command a premium price. I will always prefer to buy comics that are in VF condition or better; but, I don't consider myself a "mint addict". I can always find more than enough high grade books than my budget will allow me to buy, and there are always certain comics that I will buy regardless of their condition (just as soon as I find them!)

Christopher Hanks
Salt Lake City, Utah

(You make some interesting points Chris! I've been discussing one of your topics with collectors all over the country recently, and all of them express a similar perspective to yours. I guess the "rational" position to "grade collecting" that these fans generally suggest

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"There is no such thing as the absolute ownership of a work of art or of a document of historical value…so in the case of a fine illuminated manuscript, or a copy of a scarce printed book, the owner is at the most in the position of a life-tenant, with the implied duty of handing on the property to the next tenant in as good or in better condition then it was when it came into his possession."

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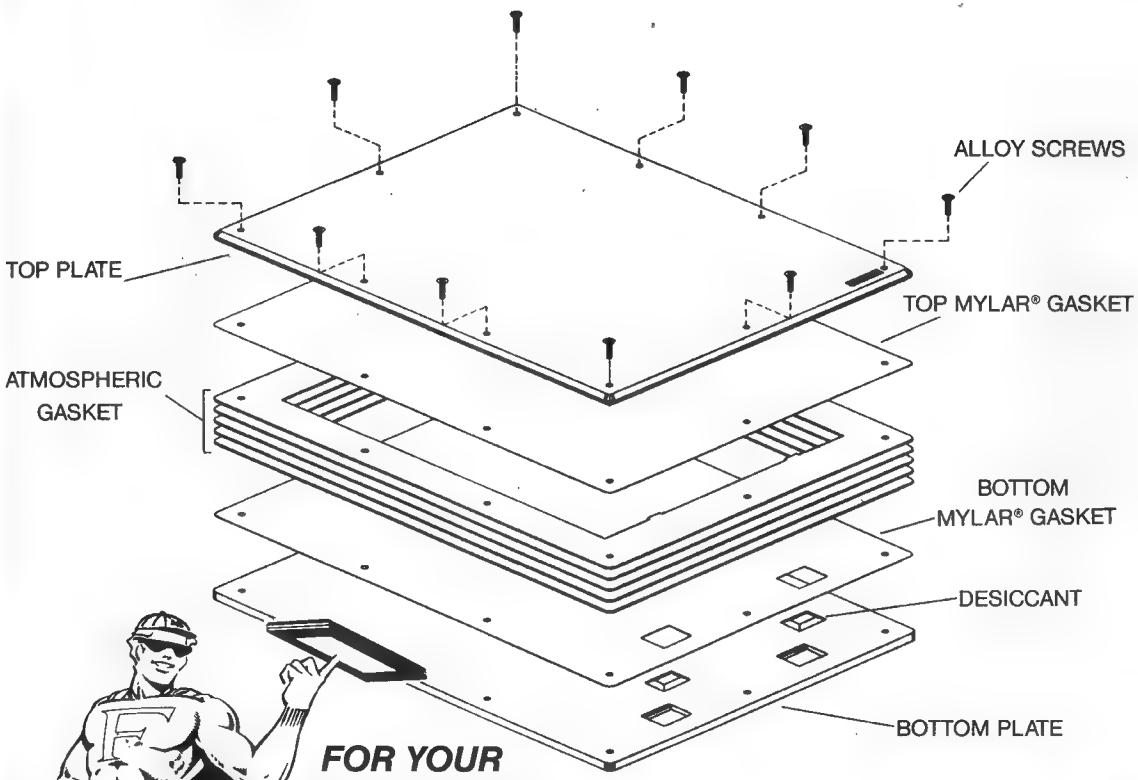

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might be summarized with three perspectives: 1. They prefer high grade when available (big surprise huh) 2. Mid and even low grade won't stop them from purchasing a book, if it is the only copy available for awhile, as long as the price is reduced proportionally and 3. Higher grade should, of course, rightfully command a premium. Incidentally, the demand for Mile High Books is as strong as ever. As a matter of fact, as more and more collectors understand how truly amazing the level of preservation is in the majority of MH specimens, the more enthusiastic they become. In my opinion, anyone who suggests that condition is not important has missed one of the most central esthetic aspects of our hobby. On the other hand, if they suggest that lower condition should stop one from enjoying their comics, they've missed the boat also. I'll get down off my soap box now... Editor)

Story on Storage

Thanks for the help with my problem with the dealer. Enclosed is an extension for my existing subscription... I would have extended it another five years if I could. I have a question or a suggestion for an article. As the popularity of comic books goes up, as does the value, the question arises, "what do I do with my valuable comic collection." Some people keep their best or most valuable books in a bank safety deposit box thinking that is the best place. Some people keep their books at home. My question is, exactly where is the safest place to keep my books? If I put them in the bank and the bank burns down are my books covered by insurance? If I keep them at home in a vault what precautions should I take to prevent damage from moisture? Personally, I believe what good is a beautiful comic if I can't look at it whenever I want? If I go to great lengths to find a beautiful high grade book I like to admire it once in a while, and not in some bank vault. If I can afford a super high grade key book I feel I can also afford a safe place to keep it in order to insure its safety. Those are some of my opinions, what are yours, and maybe some of your experts? Anyway you have the best comic mag around. The articles are top notch. And I am glad to see a market report finally included in the latest issue. I feel that is the most important aspect in a comic journal that is read by the most serious of collectors. Keep up the great work.

Stuart F. Deitcher
Reading, Pennsylvania

(Excellent suggestion for an article. I've prepared some insurance appraisals in the past and I can tell you that the question of storage methods and locations has emerged as extremely important topic of discussion. We have an article in works at this writing that I believe will address most of the major concerns and questions regarding this issue. And who said you can't subscribe for 5 years? Please feel free! Editor)

Yea for Funny Animals

Nice Job on your latest issue. Steve Sibra's article/column made me feel much better. You see I like all those off beat and esoteric "funny animals" too. You are not alone Steve. I'm totally hooked on CBM. That's all folks...

Allan R. Sivikly
Newark, New Jersey

You Don't Always Get What You Pay For

I have been actively purchasing Silver Age comics since 1988. I have dealt with a number of dealers and have had many good experiences, but also a number of concerns. My concerns must reflect those of other collectors, but I read little of this. I am writing about receiving comics from dealers which are not in the grade specified when purchased - either overgraded, restored, or even sent poorly packaged and subsequently damaged. Quite often I have purchased comics advertised as NM or NM/M that have arrived with undocumented creases, tears, splits, tanning, etc., that have meant they were overgraded. At times, I have been very frustrated and disillusioned. A dilemma I often face under such circumstances is that even though the book is overgraded I feel I should keep it anyway because it is one I have wanted badly or have not seen for sale before. I have also received comics which have been "restored" without documentation, and this includes comics purchased in 1989 where the comics were actually trimmed up to one-half of an inch in height to clean the edges (unbeknownst to me at the time). With the prices of Silver Age books rising incredibly what I foresee in the future to a greater degree are higher priced books being more professionally restored but sold as unrestored. I consider myself a reasonably knowledgeable collector with a good eye for grade, however, I cannot tell a book that has been cleaned and pressed or one that has had other unobtrusive restoration.

I do read of many individuals complaining of the comic industry not being taken seriously, however I feel at this point it does not deserve to be. There are no good standards that dealers have to follow and we must rely on the integrity of the individual dealer. I remember some time ago reading Keith Contarino writing about the need for a standardized grading service and I believe this is required. I suspect many dealers are not enthusiastic about this. Why? One may say because it is too time consuming, too much effort or even logistically unrealistic, however I suspect the real reason is money that could be lost. If dealers were forced to follow strict grading standards they would no longer be able to realize as much profit from actual lower grade or restored books. The only way I can foresee something like this happening is if collectors demand it. There is currently a company (The Pacific Comics Exchange) who uses a standardized grading service and identifies restored books. I am starting to purchase more and more books through this company because I know exactly what I'm getting. I feel that until there are these kind of agreed upon grading and restoration standards involving the entire industry, that there will continue to be unsuspecting collectors taken advantage of and our hobby as a whole will never be taken seriously.

Gordon Shymko
Alberta, Canada

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Collectors' Alert!

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(The dealer in question has recently gone out of business, possibly, because so many other collectors were equally unhappy. If one has a concern about a mail order transaction, I suggest following the guidelines in the section entitled "A Word About Mail Order" on page 33 of the Overstreet Grading Guide. It sums up, rather well I feel, the appropriate method for addressing this problem. And you are right... ultimately we must rely on the integrity of the individual dealer. The good news is that the vast majority of them are honest, decent, and fair. I've been buying via mail order consistently since 1963 and way over 90% of those hundreds and hundreds of transactions were extremely satisfactory. Editor)

Sotheby's Catalog Bargain

If any of your readers still don't have a copy of the catalog from last December's Sotheby's Comic Auction I know where they can get one cheap. If they haven't seen this book, it's worth purchasing. The book itself is hardback with full color photographs of every lot. The text accompanying each photograph is interesting, but most of us will recognize passages taken out of *Overstreet's*. If you call Sotheby's today their price is $45. However, if you call The Auction Catalog Co. in San Rafael, CA their price is $10 plus shipping! Plus, for 50¢ they'll send you a copy of the prices realized for the lots which sold. Personally, reports published elsewhere on the auction are more informative because they included the highest bid on the items which passed. The Catalog company's phone number is 1-800-487-0428 and their item number is 6261. Sotheby's event number is 121891. I almost forgot. Sotheby's said the catalogs for the auction this October won't be available for awhile even though ads in the *CBG* seem to indicate otherwise.

Mike Potter
Corvallis, Oregon

(Thanks Mike, I'll pass your info along. Editor)

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Richard's References

I really enjoyed Richard Halegua's article on Brave and Bold art. Great information that I will use as a reference in the future. I also liked your "new look" and new logo, cleaner and easier on the eyes. I don't know how you folks do it every month, but CBM is my kind of magazine. Best of luck with it.

Kevin and Diane Smith
Houston, Texas

Classically Confused

I have not written to any magazine before, but I wanted to make a couple of quick points. Pat Calhoun's articles are just great every single issue and Michael Naiman's article on Cave Carson (among other characters) was wonderful. I've always felt Cave Carson was a good character, and Mike's article was the first I have ever read on this topic. I also loved all the pictures of comic book covers in Mike's article, please use more in your future articles. The high point of CBM #14 in my opinion was the Stan Lee interview from 1972. It was really a great idea. I also think I got what Dan Malan wanted me to get about the highest reorder number (HRN) but I'm still thinking about it. I never realized collecting *Classics Illustrated* could be so involved. I decided to look up a few prices in the latest Overstreet and was blown away by how many *Classics* reprints there actually are. Maybe I'll collect them after I study a little more. One more thing. I love Fandom Flashback's! Please do more of it. CBM is terrific. A loyal reader,

Geoffrey McMahon
Detroit, Michigan

You Asked For It...

Just hate the new logo. You asked!

Michele Murray
Cleveland, Ohio

Brave & Bold Trivia

Really enjoyed the Brave & the Bold special issue, the timing was great, it came three days after I completed my B&B collection. That last issue, #4, took me over two years to find. Some B&B trivia: 1) The only issue (1-24) with no Viking Prince story is #6. 2) The issue which lists the wrong story on the cover is #8 (cover lists a Golden Gladiator story, but was actually a Viking Prince story). 3) The most team-up appearances with Batman: Green Arrow (10), followed by Metal Men (7).

CBM just continues to improve, it's a great asset to the hobby. Best wishes for continued success.

Don French
Eugene, Oregon

Bogus Bogy

No article in the history of fandom has made me laugh so hard as Lee Hester's "advice to shop owners" in CBM #14. Right on! Sign me up for a subscription. I have a feeling this is the beginning of a wonderful friendship...

Jimmy Epstein
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Sounds like the last line of a movie to me, so I guess we'll use it to end this months Marketplace Mail. Thanks to all of you who wrote in this month and even though we didn't have room to print all of your letters, be assured that we read every one and take your comments to heart. If you would like to write to us, we'd love to hear from you! Send your cards and letters to:

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I have to admit, at times I was skeptical that such an ambitious project could be carried out. Such skepticism is not unusual in a world where vision, passion and sharing have been replaced by profit as the seed of such ventures. Your Photo-Journal is a labor of love, it is a product of your vision, your passion, and your desire to share with others something beautiful you have found in the world. I look at my Photo-Journal Guide every day. Thank you for sharing your dream and creating a rare and beautiful thing.

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There are books published in many collectible fields, and few are milestones. The Photo-Journal Guide is one of these rare milestone books. This book will change the way we view and are viewed as a collectible field. This book is a must, and will always come highly recommended. To sum up the Photo Journal, it is not just a book, it is a publishing event.

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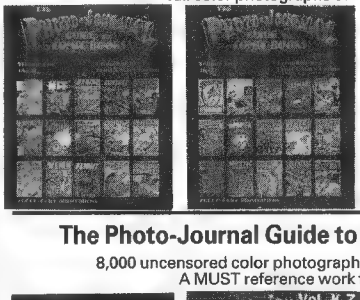

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What a phenomenal achievement! The historical aspect of your comic book compendium is inestimable. But as a source of graphic design for artists, it is even more important. The fact that you actually brought it off is a miracle. Thanks so much for your valiant effort.

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PICTURED HOLDING THE *VG+ COPY OF DETECTIVE COMICS* #27 THAT HE PURCHASED FOR A RECORD $29,850, IS COLLECTOR/DEALER GERALD JACOBS, OWNER OF "CHILDHOOD MEMORIES". ALSO PICTURED ARE TODD M. REZNIK (LEFT) & ROBERT J. ROTER (RIGHT) OF THE PACIFIC COMIC EXCHANGE, INC.

An unrestored VG+ copy of Detective Comics #27 sells for $29,850

On May 14, 1992, in Los Angeles, The Pacific Comic Exchange, Inc. announced that an unrestored *Detective Comics* #27 (featuring the first appearance of Batman) sold for $29,850. The sale took place exactly 53 years to the month from the original publication date of the comic. The realized price of the VG+ copy was only $150 less than the Overstreet Fine price (or approximately 1.5 times guide).

Robert J. Roter, President of PCE (the company which brokered the book) commented "we operate in much the same manner as a real estate company." Mr. Roter further stated "This sale demonstrates once again that vintage comic collecting is emerging as an important investment vehicle. $29,850 is a record price for a vintage comic in Very Good Plus (VG25) condition." PCE is affiliated with the Comic Grading Service of America, originator of the CGSA grading system, a "scientific and objective method for determining the condition of a comic book" according to Mr. Roter. He added "...the *Detective Comics* #27 received several offers and was the subject of intense price negotiations on PCE's international on-line comics trading network before being sold."

The "TEC 27" (collectors jargon for *Detective* #27) was purchased by Gerald Jacobs, a dealer and collector in New York City. Jacobs, an avid Batman fan and collector since childhood, owns "Childhood Memories," a company which deals in collectible comic books. The seller is an un-named midwest farmer who also began collecting in his youth.

Several events have focused fandom attention on *Detective Comics* #27 recently. Among them are:

– Hollywood's intense media blitz for the first Batman movie.

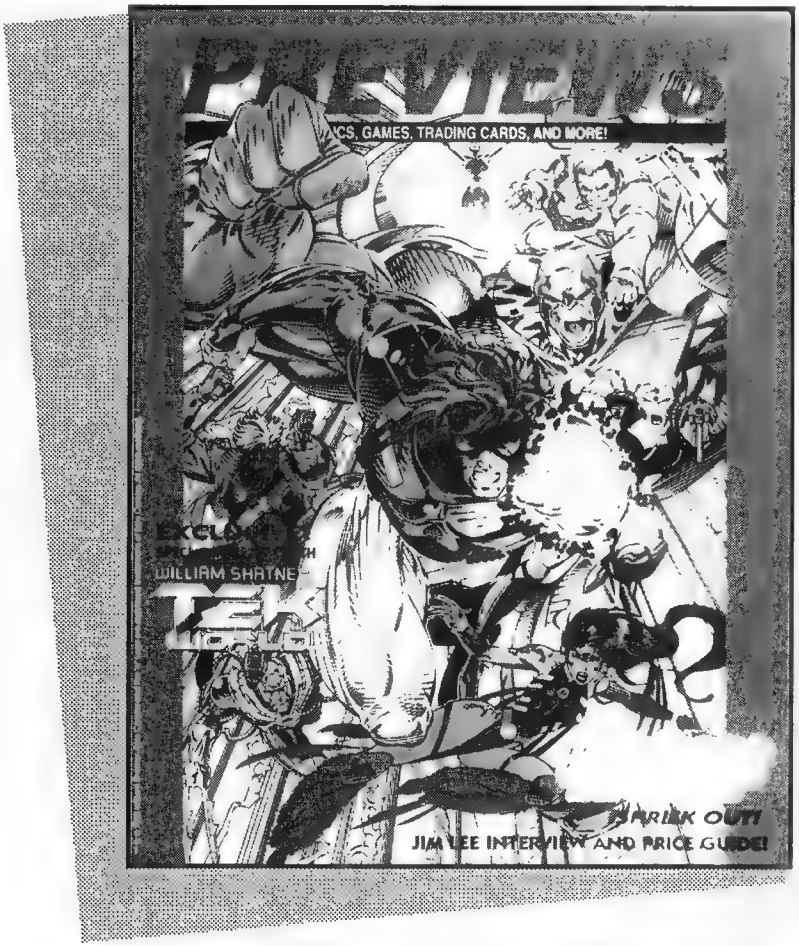
– The hefty $55,000 paid for an unrestored fine copy of *Detective* #27 at the 1991 Sotheby's auction.

– The media coverage of the "Batman Returns" movie (scheduled for release this summer).

– The fact that the 1991 and 1992 editions of The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide list the Caped Crusader's premier as the single most valuable comic book.

– The fact that the 1992 Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide high book value for *Detective* #27's increased a whopping 70% in a single year!

The sale of a mid grade copy of this historically important Golden Age comic book for significantly above guide (combined with the list above), suggests that the trend towards continued "meteoric" increases in collector demand and value seem likely. Fandom's continued fascination with the very first comic book to feature Batman appears to be a "sure bet".



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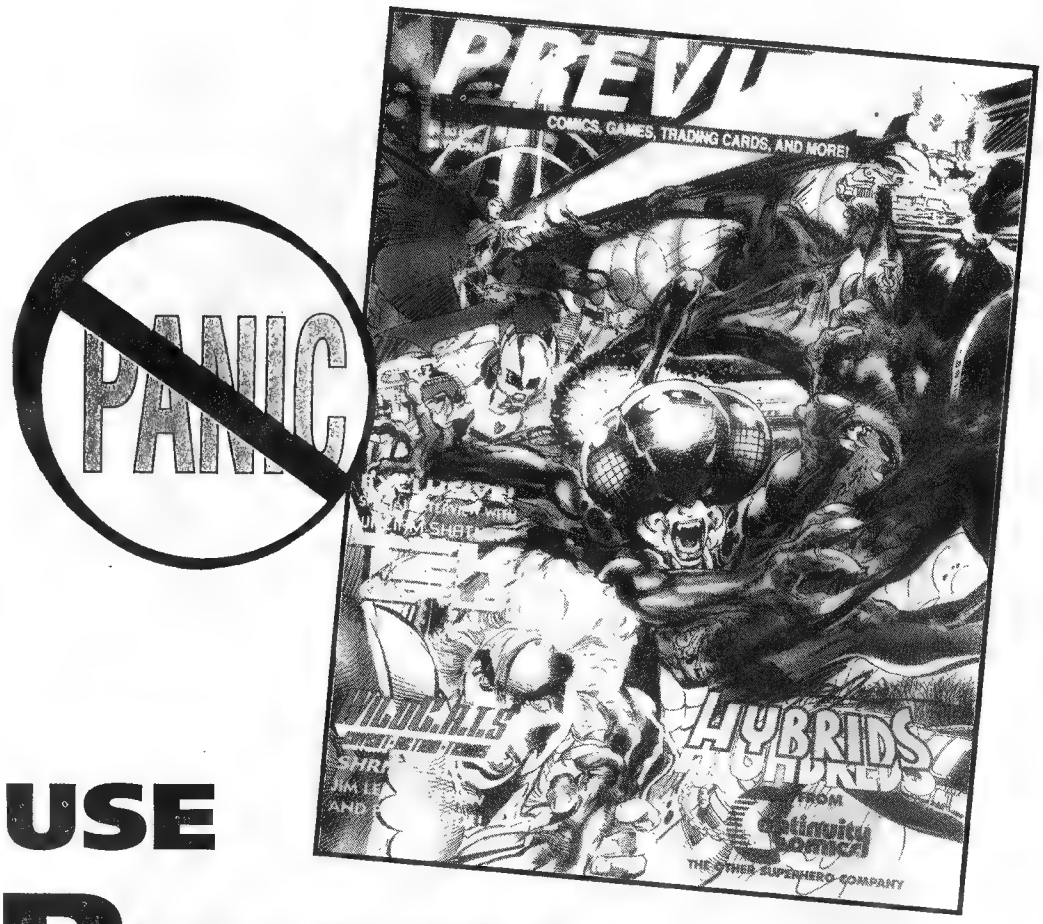

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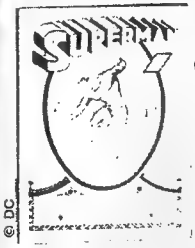
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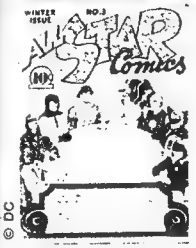

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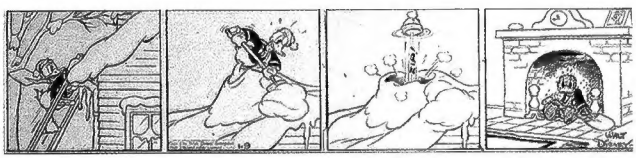

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